March-April 1977

THE ARYAN PATH

VOLUME XLVIII. NO. 2

EDITORIAL REPRINT from MARGARET SMITH
The Theosophy of Ammonius Saccas

CATHERINE ROBERTS
Love, Righteousness, and Ethics
A Question for Judaism

KAMALA RATNAM
Burning Water

R. S. GILL
Science and Values

BOOKS REVIEWED INCLUDE

The Changing Indian Civilization; Christmas Humphrey's *The Search Within; A Course in Meditation;* R. C. Zaehner's *The Teachings of the Magi; Consciousness: A Western Treatment of Tibetan Yoga;* M. Hiriyanna's *Indian Conception of Values:* U. R. Ananthamurthy's *Saṁskāra; Equatorial Guinea: The Forgotten Dictatorship*

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however dimly and lost among the host —
as does the Evening Star
to those who tread their path in darkness.

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SOPHIA WADIA

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THE ARYAN PATH

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CONTRIBUTION

The Editor is responsible for unsigned contributions only and is not necessarily in agreement with the views of the contributors, to whom free expression of opinion is given

SUBSCRIPTIONS

THE ARYAN PATH is published every alternate month beginning with January. Subscriptions are accepted for calander years or periods covering six issues. Orders, accompanied by the appropriate remittance, should be sent to the Editorial and Business Office, Bombay, or the London Office

BOOK BORROWING PRIVILEGES

Subscribers in India may borrow, from the "Aryan Path" section of the United Lodge of Theosophists Library, Bombay, Books reviewed in THE ARYAN PATH, paying only registered book-post charger if books are required by post

RATES

	Single Copy	Annual Subscription
INDIA	Rs. 3.00	Rs. 15.00
EUROPE	20*p*	£1.05 (or equivalent)
THE AMFRICA	$1.10	$5.50 (or equivalent)

OFFICES

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICE	Theosophy Hall 40, Mew Marin Lines Bombay 400 020
LONDON OFFICE	62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AH

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THE ARYAN PATH

Point out the "Way" — however dimly, and lost among the host — as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.

—The Voice of the Silence

VOL. XLVIII MARCH–APRIL 1977 No. 2

MARGARET SMITH

The Theosophy of Ammonius Saccas

Founder of the Neo-Platonic School

[We reprint this article from THE ARYAN PATH, May 1936.—ED.]

AMMONIUS SACCAS, the real founder of the Neo-Platonic School, whose teachings given orally (for he himself wrote nothing) were developed and set down in writing by his disciples, entered into an inheritance of ideas and beliefs which could be traced back as far as Socrates. Born in the latter half of the second century A.D., at Alexandria, Ammonius lived both at a period and in an environment which were fully ripe for the reception of the theosophic doctrine characteristic of his teaching. Alexandria had been founded as a meeting place for East and West, and they mingled in its streets, its University, and its temples. At the time when Ammonius Saccas developed his doctrines, it was the residence of Greeks, of native Egyptians, and of considerable numbers of Jews as also of many strangers from the East: in religion, the gods of Hellas and of the Nile, in addition to Christianity, Judaism, Brahminism, and Buddhism, asserted their claims. Among the Greeks, the Neo-Pythagoreans not only derived their teachings from Pythagoras, but combined with them Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Epicurean elements, together with Oriental ideas taken from Persian and Egyptian teachings. Among the immediate precursors of Ammonius Saccas were Plutarch of Cheronea (A.D. 50-120) and Numenius the Syrian, who flourished between A.D. 160 and 180, and who developed the idea of the Neo-Platonic Triad. The Orphic writings also arose about this time; while orthodox Christianity was seeking to link its teachings with Greek philosophy and the Christian Gnostics were developing their distinctive doctrines based upon Persian and Neo-Babylonian Mysticism,

and influenced by the Hermetic philosophy, the mystery cults of Thrace, Phrygia, and Samos, and by Indian and Chinese Theosophy. At the same time Judaism, through the *Kabbala* and the teaching of Philo of Alexandria, was assimilating mystical and philosophical elements.

The Orphics and Pythagoreans held the doctrine of rebirth, associated with the idea that the soul, though immortal, had fallen from its original divine estate and only by a gradual process of purification in a series of lives — a "way" of life, by which it could die to passion and desire — and in an underworld purgatory, could it be freed and once more become divine as it was before. So these Neo-Pythagoreans were ascetics, while teaching the homogeneity of all being, conceiving of God as both transcendent and immanent; the one could be manifested in many; the many could lose themselves in the One. The doctrine of emanation, which Ammonius developed, was found in the *Avesta* as well as in the Jewish *Kabbala,* and in the teaching of the Jew Philo and the Gnostics, who were especially characterized by the claim to teach an esoteric knowledge.

Ammonius Saccas, born in an age which was conscious of a deep religious need and was seeking for release from sensuality through asceticism, and for salvation through an immediate intuition of the Supreme Being, was able to incorporate these elements into a unique system of theosophy, which claimed to be both an absolute philosophy and an absolute religion. Little is known of his early life: he was born probably about 175 A.D., and his biographers are agreed that he was the child of Christian parents and brought up as a Christian but that, after he came into touch with philosophy, he became independent of any specific religious faith. He was evidently of humble origin, his name Saccas or Saccophoros (Sack-Bearer), indicating that he was a porter, probably engaged in unloading wheat on the Alexandrian quays. Circumstances must have made it possible for him to study at some period of his life, and among his teachers have been mentioned Athenagoras, a Christian Platonist of the second century, and Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-217), who both taught a Christian philosophy. It is certain that Ammonius had made a close study of the teaching of Philo, the Hellenic Jew, and of that of Numenius, a follower of Philo, who combined with the teaching of the Greeks the wisdom of the Magians, the Egyptians, the Brahmins, and the Jews. Through these teachers, or through his own independent study, Ammonius derived his knowledge of Plato and Aristotle.

After long study and meditation Ammonius Saccas began to teach. He opened a school of philosophy in Alexandria, where he lived in the University quarter, and became the most famous teacher of philosophy

of the age — his methods, Porphyry tells us, being not the blind acceptance of books and authors, but the personal investigation of every problem and formulation of his own original views. One of his pupils, Longinus, held to be the foremost critic of the period, said of Ammonius that he greatly exceeded his contemporaries in his mental grasp and was one of the most accomplished scholars of his time, unapproached in the breadth of his learning. Ammonius gathered around him a large number of disciples, including many Christians, since these latter were interested in his discussion of the different philosophical systems; and his own Christian upbringing, together with the fact that the Greek philosophy was not at this time committed to polytheism, made it possible for Ammonius to regard Christianity with tolerance and to retain certain Christian ideas. Among these Christian disciples was the famous Origen Adamantius (A.D. 185-254), who for a long time attended the public lectures of Ammonius, and Heracles, who was a student under Ammonius for five years. Other pupils — Hellenists known to have studied under Ammonius — were Longinus (213-273), already referred to, Olympius of Alexandria, and Antonius. These attended only his public lectures, which were probably limited to a critical review of the teaching of the different philosophical schools; but his really original teaching was given as an esoteric doctrine to a few chosen intimate disciples, among whom were Plotinus, Erennius, and a second Origen, who was a pagan. These three chosen followers entered into a compact not to disclose any of the doctrine which Ammonius had revealed to them, either because they were anxious to conserve it for themselves, or possibly in accordance with a wish expressed by their master, not through any jealousy on account of his own fame, but because of the nature of the doctrine which envisaged the possibility of a higher and more direct relation with the Divine Essence than any which the philosophic schools had conceived, and one which could not be discussed before a popular audience.

Of these three, Plotinus was, in all respects, the most outstanding, and also, undoubtedly, the closest to Ammonius in temperament and the one most receptive of his teaching. From the age of twenty Plotinus had been attracted by philosophy; he had gone from one to another of the lecturers in Alexandria, but had found none who could give him what he really wanted. At last a friend, realizing his craving for the best and highest, advised him to go to Ammonius Saccas, and after the first lecture Plotinus exclaimed, "This is the man for whom I was seeking," and with Ammonius he remained continuously for eleven years, until he reached the age of forty. It is related that during this period Plotinus made such progress in philosophy that he became eager to investigate

the Persian methods and the system adopted among the Indians — a proof that Ammonius must have indicated the Oriental origin of certain of his doctrines. Plotinus then settled in Rome — it may be that by this time his master was dead. The date of Ammonius's death is placed by some as early as A.D. 241, by others in A.D. 244 or 245, and by one writer as late as A.D. 250.

For a long time Plotinus kept to his compact and, in his intercourse with his associates, revealed nothing of his master's doctrine, but Erennius broke the agreement and then Origen. After this Plotinus, feeling, perhaps, that his long association with Ammonius fitted him, more than any other, to be his interpreter to others, began to base his discussions with his most intimate group of disciples on what he had learnt from Ammonius, though for ten years still he limited himself to discussion and wrote nothing. After this period he betook himself to writing on the subjects discussed, that is, the doctrine of Ammonius Saccas. Though the form in which we have these teachings is due to Plotinus and his disciple Porphyry, who arranged and systematized them, and though they must certainly owe much to the radiant and original genius of Plotinus himself, yet there is little doubt that their ultimate basis is the original doctrine of Ammonius Saccas, the real founder of the Neo-Platonic School.

It was of Ammonius that Hierocles (living in the fifth century A.D.) wrote that he was the first to attach himself to what was true in the philosophy which preceded him, and, ignoring what was commonplace, to attain to a thorough knowledge of Plato and Aristotle, and to unite them in one and the same spirit, thus bequeathing philosophy "at peace" to his disciples.

Ammonius was no mere eclectic, but a profound and original thinker, who considered the doctrines taught before his day and accepted what was true in them, but otherwise sought for truth, at its source, through his own intuition.

The aim of Ammonius Saccas, then, evidently was to reconcile the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, while combining them with Oriental mysticism and theosophy and the ascetic teachings of the Neo-Pythagoreans, so that all might form a higher, transfigured system, revealing itself especially by the doctrine of the Absolute One, the identification of the Platonic Ideas with the Divine Intelligence, the theory of emanations, and the belief in the return of all to the Supreme Unity. So were evolved the doctrines of Neo-Platonism, mainly Greek in origin, but Oriental in spirit, forming the bridge between the ancient and the modern metaphysics and marking an epoch in the history of religion.

There can be little doubt that the teaching on the Nature of God which is found in the *Enneads* of Plotinus is derived directly from Ammonius. All forms and phases of existence, he teaches, emanate from the divine and all strive to return thither. The Divine is regarded as a Triad including the One or First-Existent; the Divine Intelligence, the First Thinker and Thought; and the Universal Soul, the First and Only Principle of Life.

Above, yet including, all things is the One-and-All, the Absolute, the Transcendent, Infinite, Unconditioned, Universal Essence, Unknowable, Ineffable, nowhere yet everywhere: One, yet manifested in plurality, as the sun by its rays.

> There is a principle which transcends Being: this is the One — the One, as transcending Intellect, transcends knowing — thus the One is in truth beyond all statement: the All-transcending possesses, alone of all, true being and is not a thing among things.[1]

That One is neither remote from things nor identified with them; there is nothing containing it, but it contains all: it is the Good to the universe, in that all things are dependent upon it, each in its mode.[2]

From this First Principle — the Source and Ground of all being, transcending all known attributes and even the idea of existence, the One, the Highest Good, the Absolute — the first emanation is the Divine Intelligence, Universal Mind, the World of Ideas, containing all things immortal, the archetypes of all things in the phenomenal world, the Overmind, of which all minds partake. With this Spiritual Universe begins the existence of plurality, complexity, multiplicity. It is a mediator between man and the Unknowable One, for it contemplates ceaselessly, and depends upon the Supreme Being, while it is also the giver of wisdom to the human soul.

> The Intellectual stands before the Supreme Beginning in whose forecourt, as it were, it announces in its own being the entire content of the Good, that which precedes all, locked in unity, of which this is the expression already touched by multiplicity.[3]

The Intellectual Principle is the maker and creator of the All, and when the creature turns itself towards it in contemplation this contemplative intuition is intelligence.

From the Intellectual Principle emanates the All-Soul, which is the creator of the material universe, the sensual world, and from it come forth other souls. On the subject of the Soul and its nature we have not only the evidence of Plotinus, but two direct references to the teaching

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[1] *Ennead* v, 3: 12, 13 [2] *Ibid.*, 5, 9 [3] *Ibid.*, 9, 2

of Ammonius, given by Nemesius, Bishop of Emesa, living at the end of the fourth century, and Gregory of Nyssa (*ob. c.* A.D. 395), which were probably derived from the writings of Erennius, mentioned above as one of those who were entrusted with the esoteric teaching of his master. These deal with the immortality of the Soul, which is proved by the fact that it is the unifying principle of the body and does not suffer change, as the body does; which gives life, and therefore is not corporeal; which is nourished by knowledge — which is not material — and therefore it cannot itself be material. Ammonius had also stated that the soul suffers no change by its union with the body, but remains distinct from it and is able, in its contemplation of the Intellectual, to isolate itself from the body.[4] The teaching of Plotinus agrees with this.[5] The human soul is one with the All-Soul and partakes of the Divine Life, but it has its own distinct individuality; and human nature, like the Divine Nature, contains three principles, the first being the Intellectual principle, which is the true self, and by the life of virtue, of "sagehood," the Divine Image within it is revealed and man is able to attain to contemplation of the One. The second principle is that of the Reasoning Soul, the principle of the normal human life, and the third principle is that of animal life, the irrational soul. When loosed from the body, the soul goes whither it has tended and deserves to go. Those who have not attained to freedom must suffer rebirth, but those who have become emancipated by identifying themselves with the highest within them, awake *from* the body, not *with* it, and enter in to dwell "where is Reality and true Being and the Divine, in God."[6]

The fall of the soul is due to entering into mortal birth, to the downward drag of the irrational principle, and to self-will. As regards the body and the irrational soul, man is entangled in the chain of physical causation; and so long as he allows himself to be the slave of the senses, he is not free, but in identifying himself with his higher soul, the true self, he can find freedom: he has a master, but he is that which is his master. Free will is shown by right action. By the same way by which it descended, the soul can reascend to its Source.

> Since your soul is so exalted a power, so Divine, you may be assured that by its possession, you are already close to God. In the strength of this power, begin to make your way towards Him: you have not far to go: there is not much between.[7]

The soul must come to itself by the process of purification, by

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[4] Nemesius, *De Nat. Hom.* II, p. 70: III, p. 129 (ed. Mattaei). Gregory, *Opera*, II, pp. 91, 109 (ed. Morellus)

[5] *Ennead* IV, 7 [6] *Ennead* III, 4, 4 [7] *Ibid.*, V, 1, 3

asceticism first, and then by the practice of the virtue which aims at likeness to God and brings the soul near to Him.

> If the eye that adventures the vision be dimmed by vice: if it be impure or weak or unable in its cowardly blenching to see the uttermost radiance, then it sees nothing. To any vision must be brought an eye adapted to what is to be seen and having some likeness to it. Never did eye see the sun unless it has first become sun-like and never can the soul have vision of the First Beauty, unless itself be beautiful.[8]

The remedy for the soul is to get rid of desire, to free itself from the claims of the body and the senses. So it may accomplish the first stage of return and, being cleansed from the evil of the senses and desire, may be restored to the unity of the Universal Soul. But the soul must ascend still further, to the Intellectual Principle, after whom, and from whom, Soul is, and it is carried upwards by the love of Beauty and the love of Good. There the soul understands its true unity with the All.

> The soul thus cleansed has become all idea and Reason, wholly free of body, intellective, entirely of that Divine order from which the well-spring of Beauty rises and all the race of Beauty. Hence the Soul heightened to the Intellectual Principle is beautiful to its full capacity. And it is just to say that in thus becoming good and beautiful, the soul is becoming like to God, for from the Divine comes all the Beauty and all the Good in beings.[9]

But the soul has not yet attained to the summit, it must ascend still higher to the final Good, the Vision of the One. Plotinus writes:

> This is for those that will take the upward path, who will divest themselves of all that has been put on in the descent — until, having renounced all that is other than God, each in the solitude of himself shall behold that solitary dwelling Existence, the Apart, the unmingled, the Pure, on which all things depend, towards which all things look, in which they live and move and know, the Source of Life and Intellection and Being.[10]

But this comes not by expectation nor by action, it is an All-pervading Presence, realized by the soul,

> which has held itself at rest, looking towards the good and the beautiful alone, giving up its entire being to that in a perfect surrender, and now, in tranquillity, filled with power and taking a new beauty to itself, glowing in the light of that Presence.[11]

The one who has seen this Vision has passed beyond self-consciousness and has attained to union with the One.

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[8] *Ibid.*, I, 9 [9] *Ibid.*, I [10] *Ennead* I, 7 [11] *Ibid.*, V, 5, 7

Neo-Platonism, embodying the teachings of Ammonius Saccas, had its rise in Alexandria, but its influence was felt very soon in all the provinces of the Roman Empire, and became the inspiration of philosophers and scientists everywhere. The various tendencies which shewed themselves among the successors of Ammonius are seen all to depend upon him, while emphasizing each a particular side of his teaching. In the Neo-Platonism taught in Rome by Plotinus, the Greek elements prevailed, and among these the Platonic was prominent. In the Syrian School, of which Iamblichus was the typical representative, the Oriental elements found in Pythagorism were conspicuous, together with an inclination towards theurgic practices. Finally, in the scholastic Neo-Platonism of Athens represented by Proclus, who depended mainly upon Plotinus, and to a less degree upon Iamblichus, the Aristotelian element finds the most prominent place. It was from Proclus that Dionysius, the so-called Areopagite, derived his Neo-Platonism, which he Christianized, and from him, in turn, that Neo-Platonism established its influence in the West.

Thus it was that Ammonius Saccas, the "God-inspired," from being a humble carrier of wheat, became, as if by a miracle, the head of one of the most celebrated schools of philosophy of antiquity and, during more than three centuries, exercised an immense influence over the development of the human spirit, an influence which still has its force and is likely to be maintained so long as men seek for Beauty and Goodness and Truth.[12]

MARGARET SMITH

Do not feel qualms or despondency or discomfiture if thou dost not invariably succeed in acting from right principles; but when thou art foiled, come back again to them, and rejoice if on the whole thy conduct is worthy of a man, and love the course to which thou returnest.

—MARCUS AURELIUS

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[12] For the Life of Ammonius Saccas, Cf. Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*; L. J. Dehaut. *Essai Historique sur la Vie et La Doctrine d'Ammonius Saccas*, Brussels, 1836; E. Vacherot, *Histoire Critique de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie*, Paris, 1846.

For his Teaching, Cf. Plotinus *Enneads* (translated by S. Mackenna); F. Whittaker, *The Neo-Platonists*, Cambridge, 1918; C. Bigg, *Neo-Platonism*, London, 1895; F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy*, London, 1912; and references cited.

CATHERINE ROBERTS

Love, Righteousness, and Ethics

A Question for Judaism

[Dr. Catherine Roberts will be remembered by many readers for several of her contributions to THE ARYAN PATH, all of which have combined a sensitive, ethical concern with intimate knowledge of the current positions of science. Born in California, Dr. Roberts studied at the University of California, and received her doctorate in 1943. Since the war, she has lived in Europe, and for many years was a microbiologist at the Carlsberg Laboratories, Copenhagen, Denmark. In 1961, however, she relinquished her scientific career to study Greek philosophy and to challenge (by writing and lecturing) the "philosophical, ethical and evolutionary implications of modern biological research." Her book *The Scientific Conscience,* published in both the U.S.A. and Britain, was highly praised.

In this article she takes her departure from the book, *Central Thoughts in Judaistic Ethics,* by the Danish scholar, Andreas Simonsen. Together with generous appreciation of the Judaistic contribution to ethical thought, Dr. Roberts puts forward gentle queries regarding the need she perceives for the Judaistic tradition to evolve towards greater sensitivity where the attitude to the animal world is concerned.—ED.]

Berlingske Tidende, a Copenhagen newspaper, recently published an article on Jewish ethics written by a Danish psychiatrist, Dr. Thorkild Vanggaard, in which he expressed great enthusiasm for a new book, *Central Thoughts in Judaistic Ethics,* by the Danish author and classical scholar, Andreas Simonsen. I wholeheartedly agree with Dr. Vanggaard's positive reaction to this work. Especially in these times, when Jewish thoughts and actions frequently meet misunderstanding, animosity, and resistance, the non-Jewish world has need of a sincere and fervent book on the ethic and religion which have ensured the survival of the Jews through centuries of suffering.

For Simonsen's book is first of all a religious book: its introductory sentence states that Jewish ethics and religion are indissolubly related. And, since our age, in growing revolt against the materialism and atheistic explanations of science, is seeking other truths, Simonsen's book has a clear message. Elevated as it is above the present chaos of humanistic and pseudo-religious concepts of ethical norms, it drives home the truth, which the Jews seem to be in full possession of, that the fundament of ethics can only be man's relation to divinity. Since religion and ethics constitute a unity, a divine ethic exists. It is this simple fact that the enquiring souls of the world must find; and I am convinced that *Central*

Thoughts in Judaistic Ethics can be of much help to them on the way.

My conviction does not stem from any belief in God having revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai the whole divine ethic, which was later written down as moral commandments in the first five books of the Old Testament constituting the Torah and still later studied and interpreted in the Talmud. My admiration for Simonsen's book is due rather to what he has to say about the Talmudic concept of the cornerstones of ethics. These, he says, are two: love and righteousness, which are inseparable parts of the innermost essence of ethics. This is a view which both supplements cold, unemotional righteousness and at the same time corrects the false, but as yet widespread, view that love alone is sufficient to better the world. As Simonsen writes,

> that righteousness is a cornerstone of Jewish ethics is thus not due to any failure to appreciate love, but only that love was not considered to be a moral fundament of equal strength. ...

In contrast to so many Christians, the Jews seem to have understood that an uncritical love for everyone is not true love but a state of mind characteristic of a loving, benevolent, friendly being, who, however, dares not condemn immoral deeds, because he considers all beings as irresponsible products of their inheritance and environment. Such an amoral life-philosophy, denying the existence of free will, has very little to do with man's ethical progress. It needs to be replaced by a higher, purer, and truer life-philosophy, such as Andreas Simonsen, out of his personal knowledge of Judaism, has so beautifully expressed. Divinity, the Jews say, is a unity made up of love and righteousness, in which our ethic is firmly anchored.

But here, I believe, one can rightly put to the Jews the following question:

> Are you prepared to begin a discussion with non-Jews who believe that in one definite respect you think and act without love and righteousness and therefore unethically?

I am thinking now about Jews in their relation to nature. While their relations to God and to their fellow men are thoroughly dealt with *in Central Thought in Judaistic Ethics,* there is no mention in this book of their relation to animals. This is an ethical deficiency. Should love and righteousness not apply also here? Many outside the Jewish community believe that they should; and, as a result of their ethical conviction, these people are opposing all forms of unjust, brutal intervention in the animal world. With regard to the specific Christian view of nature, it cannot be maintained that it stands on a higher ethical level than the

Jewish — the New Testament is unfortunately ambiguous on this point. But there are many Christians who have organized themselves in order to protect and help the lower forms of life, and, even though most Christians are still meat-eaters, their daily consumption of meat is not dependent upon ritual slaughter.

Here we come to the heart of the discussion so eagerly desired. The ancient ritual slaughter method of the Jews, *shehitah,* by means of which orthodox Jews are supplied with so-called clean bloodless Kosher meat for daily consumption, is a religious rite still maintained in many countries, including Denmark. With all due understanding and approval of the significance of ritual acts in daily life, there are nevertheless many who consider any religious law pertaining to diet which is based upon the slaughter of animals not previously rendered insensible a highly unethical rule which should be abolished. But whether the time is ripe for a frank discussion between the supporters and opponents of *shehitah,* I do not know. A Jewish friend in California, who detests *shehitah,* recently wrote in a letter:

> To many Jews, it seems, especially after the Nazi holocaust, the idea of giving up the ancient laws and traditions is also synonymous with losing their Jewish identity and, in that sense, as the philosopher, Emile Fackenheim, formulated it, giving a posthumous victory to Hitler.

Notwithstanding, I believe that with mutual tolerance, understanding, and true respect for religious rites, we are able to look forward instead of backward — forward to a world where love and righteousness, prevailing everywhere, will create harmonious relations among all creatures. A conversational exchange of thought is the beginning of this state. For every act which now is accompanied by unnecessary fear and suffering in sentient beings is an ethical problem which concerns us all, and evolution demands that we ponder these problems together.

In his book Andreas Simonsen cites Chief Rabbi Bent Melchior's fine thought about man being the partner of God in the evolution of the world. May one suggest to orthodox Jews that they think more deeply about the direction in which true evolution is going? Is man's present concern about environmental problems not an ethical desire for a more loving and righteous relation to nature? Slowly but surely evolution is proceeding in the direction of human victory over evil, but, as Simonsen so elegantly puts it, there is still much superficial optimism "brought about by slack inattentiveness in confrontation with the terrible."

And what takes place during *shehitah* is terrible. For example, a fully conscious cow is forced by two or three into a machine which is then turned in such a way that the animal has to assume a reclining

position with its head protruding and its throat laid bare. In this wholly unnatural and abject position, its throat is cut with an extremely sharp knife while from a tape-recorder is heard a short prayer. Even with considerable knowledge of Professor Johannes Pedersen's thorough study of the ancient religious thoughts which originally underlay Jewish ritual slaughter, it is impossible for me to regard this bloody ritual, which takes place regularly in the central meat market in Copenhagen, as compatible with a loving and righteous God. The extent and duration of suffering of a ritually-slaughtered animal is something about which veterinarians, physiologists, and others differ. They cannot say precisely how long the animals retain consciousness after their throats have been cut. The time is said to vary from 0 to about 60 seconds. In 1927 a scientific *shehitah* experiment was performed (in itself an unethical act!) on a cow, an ox, and a sheep. The whole experiment was filmed, and as a result it can be seen how "the cow, with a cut throat and with great loss of blood, walked with coordinated movements five meters across an open place," and it was also noted that "in the eyes of the ox an expression of fear was especially conspicuous."

One would at once expect that a loving and righteous man, who knew that in *shehitah* the *theoretical possibility* of causing intense fear and suffering exists, would not take any chance whatever but would instead work either for its abolition or for the introduction of prior stunning — instead of brushing aside all material which describes this method of slaughter as inhumane.

Why is Kosher meat still eaten? Is it a feeling of having thereby followed the Talmudic commandment not to partake of blood? But a ritually-slaughtered animal is naturally not wholly emptied of blood. Is it a feeling of having thereby followed the Talmudic commandment not to partake of a torn or lacerated animal? But there are methods of inducing insensibility before killing — as, for example, electric shock — which do not tear or damage any of the organs or the membranes of the brain. Or is it the religious feeling of having done what is ethically right in not eating "unclean" meat? But would it not be better to try to develop into religious beings who are wholly guiltless of the suffering and death of their fellow creatures? It can never be a pure or humanly decent act to mistreat an animal for one's own sake, regardless of whether it is a question of *shehitah,* other inhumane methods of slaughter, or laboratory experimentation.

For the time being *shehitah* must be looked upon as one of the as yet unsolved ethical problems of the world. Three possible solutions are in sight. One is through legislation — i.e. a prohibition laid upon the

Jewish community from without. As the ritual slaughter of fully conscious animals is permitted, oddly enough, in Denmark but not in Norway or Sweden, a common Scandinavian prohibition has been suggested. Of course this would be a step forward, but not a completely satisfactory solution so long as Kosher meat could be imported into Denmark from other countries where *shehitah* is permitted. Another, better solution can be expected to come from within as a change in mentality. Frank and open religious-ethical deliberation both within the Jewish community and without could lead to the adoption of a new attitude which considered it right to abstain from eating ritually-slaughtered animals. *Shehitah* would then gradually disappear everywhere. And when that time comes, if there should still be orthodox Jews who — just as I — completely refuse to partake of a torn animal or of the blood of an unblemished one, there remains the best of all solutions: vegetarianism.

As an opponent of *shehitah,* I have stated above some arguments which I hope will be met with tolerant interest. For, as already mentioned, it is my deepest conviction that Judaistic ethics can be of great value for a world in spiritual evolution. At the same time I believe that the two Jewish cornerstones of love and righteousness must be strengthened, and that this is in fact possible. By a loving and righteous treatment of dumb, innocent animals, whose lack of ethical conscience compels them to stand on a lower level than we, Judaism could help even more than now to realize man's god-given potentials. *Noblesse oblige!*

CATHERINE ROBERTS

Fire

You break with pentecostal flames
The desert night;
Your fountains stipple sombre skies
With showers bright.

Beauty supernal you create,
Evil to destroy;
You are of Love a symbol,
And of Joy.

AUDREY LA ROCHE

H. M. LISHMAN

A Twentieth-Century Crusade

[Miss Lishman is an old friend and contributor. A student of Theosophy, she has been engaged for very many years in voluntary work for humanitarian and reform movements — anti-vivisection, vegetarianism, animal welfare — as also homoeopathy. She is the Acting Honorary Secretary of the Hahnemann Society, the Chairman of whose Council is Michael Fryer, Founder of the Crusade Against All Cruelty to Animals. The relationship between the two societies, who share the same headquarters, is found in the fact that homoeopathic drugs are tested on human volunteers, not on animals.

Readers will find much to think about in this brief account of a crusade conducted on the basis of deep feeling but with a sense of proportion, wide and accurate information, and thoughtful methods of rational propaganda.—ED.]

IN THE FLOOD OF LITERATURE ON ANIMAL WELFARE it is by no means always easy to pick out that which is of genuine and lasting value from that which springs from a purely emotional approach. However, soundness of basic principles motivating a Society's work can be a good guide. The policy of the London-based Crusade Against All Cruelty to Animals is "to view animal welfare as an all-embracing concept based on the interdependence of all living things and man's duty to act as guardian, not ruthless exploiter."

The Crusade first began to implement this policy when its Founder Michael Fryer and Secretary Margaret Cooper undertook film/lecture tours throughout England (and sometimes also abroad) carrying out extensive educational work aimed at convincing the public of the importance of this concept. With its well-planned, eye-catching publicity, the Crusade was able to attract large audiences, sometimes numbering five or six hundred, in the days before television exerted its influence. The question, Michael Fryer asserted, was not whether animals are cuddly but whether they can suffer. The response of far too many people to animal welfare was based on the emotional appeal of an "attractive" animal rather than the basic concept that man has a duty to act humanely towards *all* animals, whether or not they are considered attractive by humankind. Michael Fryer sought to make people aware of the plight of animals who suffered out of sight and out of mind of most people and from 1955, when he launched his Crusade, spoke out boldly on behalf of the whales, the seals, and the fur-bearing animals, whose sufferings had hitherto attracted little concern. In the intervening years television has brought many disturbing images of man's cruelty to

animals right into the home, but in the fifties and early sixties Michael Fryer was pioneering the use of hard-hitting, factual documentary films as a means of presenting to many thousands of people visual evidence of man's inhumanity to animals. He was told by some (even in the humanitarian movement) that he should be ashamed for showing such disturbing films and for upsetting people by his graphic but accurate word-pictures of the prolonged suffering of the whales in their death throes. His answer to those objecting was that it was not they who were being made to suffer — it was the animals who could not protest about what was done to them — and that it was only right that the public should be told at what cost so many products of the animal kingdom were obtained. There is no doubt that the Crusade's pioneering efforts aroused in countless people deep concern about the enormity and extent of man's ruthless exploitation of animals and the great suffering which this so often involves.

The Crusade's dynamic policy and activities attracted growing support, especially from those who had been seeking a campaign with an all-embracing approach to the welfare of animals. Its activities expanded as its support and resources grew. Professionally produced literature, widely distributed, took its message far and wide throughout the country and overseas. Its journal attracted a devoted readership and stimulated positive, responsible action on specific issues of concern.

The Crusade did not neglect the cause of domestic and farm animals. Another pioneer venture which was to play a vital role in helping to achieve legislation relating to the intensive rearing of food animals was the launching in 1960 of the Humane Farming Campaign, by means of which countless people were alerted to the urgent need for concern and action against "factory farm" methods.

Pet-keeping is for the majority of people their closest link with the animal world. The Crusade teaches that pet-keeping should not be embarked upon lightly, because many of the animal-welfare and social problems caused by irresponsible pet-keeping would be avoided if people were aware of their responsibilities when taking an animal into their home. This aspect is an essential factor in the Crusade's extensive educational work with children, which began very soon after the Society was launched with extremely popular film shows and talks in schools. The educational value of this work has earned the full support and approval of teachers and education authorities. The Crusade maintains that the teaching of humane principles and respect for life from an early age not only lays the foundation for compassionate behaviour when young but also prepares the ground for responsible adulthood.

This educational work with adults and children was given added impetus in 1969 when the Crusade created an attractive, professionally equipped lecture-theatre in its new Headquarters building in North London. Aptly named the Humane Education Centre, it has become increasingly well known as a source of advice and help on many varied animal-welfare and social problems arising out of pet-keeping as well as a Centre widely esteemed throughout the country and abroad for its responsible compaigning against many abuses of animal life. Another venture pioneered by the Crusade in co-operation with several local education authorities over a six-year period was the organizing of adult education courses which were noteworthy not only for the excellence of the illustrated lectures by well-known naturalists, scientists, and humanitarians but also for the size and sustained interest of the class memberships.

It is not surprising in view of its comprehensive policy that the Crusade should have taken the initiative in instigating and sponsoring a unique research project at Oxford University on behalf of other "non-cuddly" species — crabs and lobsters. The society was fortunate in having the wholehearted support and co-operation for this project of the distinguished scientist and humanitarian, Dr. John R. Baker, F.R.S., who conducted the research and subsequently wrote up his results in three Scientific Papers which the Crusade distributed to scientists and scientific bodies throughout the world. The aim was to seek a humane method of killing crustacea which for too long have suffered by being boiled alive or killed through slow heating, both of which current methods, Dr. Baker proved conclusively, are cruel. The research resulted in the proving of a humane killing method — electrical stunning — and the Crusade is currently seeking to obtain the interest of a commercial firm in developing this.

Consistent campaigning for many years against the cruelty to geese in the production of *foie gras*; in live exports of food animals from Britain; in inhuman conditions in zoos; and in the training of performing animals are other aspects of animal welfare to which the Crusade has devoted much time and energy with the wholehearted help of its widespread and enthusiastic membership.

The Crusade supports the view of some of the world's greatest thinkers and sages that compassion towards animals is a mark of true civilization and believes that it should be an integral aspect of the balanced and *whole* way of life. The society has striven for many years to foster and encourage action on behalf of animals by the Christian Church.

There is no doubt that the Crusade was born at a time when it was needed. Its subsequent growth in size and influence is evidence not only

of the immense dedication of those who have led it and devoted themselves tirelessly to its aims and work, but to the power of an idea whose time had come. The Crusade's task of getting at the causes of cruelty — ignorance, indifference, lack of imagination, greed — and trying to change people's thoughts and habits is more difficult than ever today, because of the many human problems which claim attention and complicate daily life. Nevertheless, the Crusade's many devoted admirers and supporters can derive much encouragement and inspiration from the considerable mark the Society's pioneering work has made over the years in presenting to the public — and to the world of animal welfare — the fundamental truth that all life is interdependent and that the truly civilized person is compassionate towards all living things. Fortunately and hopefully for the future, this message has been taken up increasingly by individuals and organizations throughout Britain and in many parts of the world.

H. M. LISHMAN

It is difficult to say what righteousness is. It is not easy to indicate it. No one, in discoursing upon righteousness, can indicate it accurately.

Righteousness was declared (by Brahmã) for the advancement and growth of all creatures. Therefore, that which leads to advancement and growth is righteousness.

Righteousness was declared (by Brahma) for the advancement and another. Therefore, that is righteousness which prevents injury to creatures.

I know morality, which is eternal, with all its mysteries. It is nothing else than that ancient morality which is known to all, and which consists of universal friendliness, and is fraught with beneficence to all creatures.

That mode of living which is founded upon a total harmlessness towards all creatures or (in case of actual necessity) upon a minimum of such harm, is the highest morality.

—*Mahãbhārata*

KAMALA RATNAM

Burning Water

[Smt. Kamala Ratnam is an old friend although she makes her first appearance in THE ARYAN PATH at this late juncture. When she was invited to review *Burning Water: Thought and Religion in Ancient Mexico,* it was because of her unique intimacy with the culture of Mexico, where she resided for many years with her husband, who then was Indian Ambassador to Mexico. Smt. Ratnam has behind her a long background of literary studies in Hindi and Sanskrit, and during her stay in Mexico she also acquired a perfect facility in Spanish.

Her review of the book is not only a sympathetic evaluation of the book itself but also a cultured Indian's reflections on the relationships between ancient Mexican and Indian cultures.—ED.]

GEOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING, the United States of America are to be correctly designated United States of *North* America. The Latin Americans, especially the Mexicans, make a great point of this. In contrast to the new world of the North Americans, several countries of Latin America, such as Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, are heirs to a long-descended culture and a hoary civilization. The Spaniards, not unlike their North American cousins, tried their very best to destroy this ancient culture; it was saved only because a large part of it was covered over by centuries of fallen earth. The North Americans took delight in exterminating the indigenous population and confined what remained of it in concentration camps known as "Indian Reserves." The modern Mexican on the other hand derives deep inspiration and satisfaction from his country's past and proudly admits his "mestizo" or mixed heritage. In fact many a Mexican, highly intellectual, nurses the firm belief that he was full-blooded Indian (Aztec, Zapotec, Toltec, or Maya) in his previous life and was somehow related to the Hindus of India. This intuitive knowledge on both sides of the globe, Mexican as well as Indian, has led to much speculation and scholarly research. In reply to our "Hindu America," the Mayas of Yucatan claim that they sent their master-craftsman Maya to build our cities and that he is the one mentioned as Maya-Dānava in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Valmiki and Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata.* As a matter of fact some historians interpret the name of the present city of Meerut in Uttar Pradesh as a corruption of *Maya-Rāṣtra* — the state built by Maya.[1]

[1] Since writing about *Burning Water*, I have found that Maya-Dānava (*Dānava* was a term applied to foreigners indiscriminately — hence, "the foreigner named Maya") was responsible for building three famous cities for the Rākṣasas, whose King was Rāvaṇa. Mandodari, Rāvaṇa's wife, is referred to as Maya-Sutā, "daughter of Maya" (or belonging to the Maya family) in Vālmīki and in other versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa.* — KAMALA RATNAM

With this background, the fascinating book *Burning Water*[2] (first published in 1956) will be of special interest to students of Indian philosophy and civilization, and will serve as a good introduction to an art and thought-form ranking as one of the highest manifestations of the human spirit. Painstaking research, supported by copious archaeological evidence and verified facts together with a wealth of excellent diagrams and illustrations, has cleared the first major misconception about Mexico that "All things Mexican are Aztec in origin." In fact the Aztecs were in Mexico only for about a hundred years before the Spaniards overran them. The history of Mexico, like our own, has been very chequered. Wave upon wave of peoples from outside have intruded upon the meditative calm and introspection of the earliest known settlers, the Olmecs and later the Toltecs who built that great repository of Mexico's history and culture, the Teotihuacan, situated 50 kilometres from Mexico City. In 1519 when Cortes descended upon Mishika (the name given to Mexico by the Toltecs), he was confronted by the powerful Aztecs, who were at once worshippers of the Flower-god Xochipalli and the Rain-god Tlaloc and the heartless performers of human sacrifices culminating in the pulling out of fresh palpitating hearts as supreme offering to the benign gods. The only god of Aztec origin was Huitzilopochtli, god of war, in whose name large numbers of "prisoners, men, women and children were killed."

The Aztecs, in line with the people who preceded them, were Sun-worshippers. The sun was called Tonatiuh (*Tona*: father; *Tiuh*: in heaven; *Tiuh* is very similar to Sanskrit *Dyāus*: sky or heaven) in Nahuatl, an ancient Mexican language of great power and beauty, adopted by the Aztecs. One cannot but notice the similarity between *Nahua* and Sanskrit *Nava* or *Navya*: new; and between *Atl* and Sanskrit *Atala*: bottomless, water. "New Waters" might as well have referred to the new lands reached by Arjuna, whose journey to the Antipodes (*Pātāla-loka*) is mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. In the same way Tonatiuh might hold the key to the lost memory of Drona of the *Mahābhārata*, who constructed the Sun-temple, "Suryakunda," in the Gurugrāma (Gurgaon) district of Haryana. It is also possible that the Aztecs were given that name (cf. Sanskrit *Astika*: believer) after they accepted the Nahuatl religion.

Laurette Séjourné's book is divided into four sections, discussing the origin and decline of the Aztec Empire; the character of the Nahuatl religion; their symbolic language; and their gods. Pre-Columbian Mexi-

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[2] Laurette Séjourné, *Burning Water: Thought and Religion in Ancient Mexico*, Vanguard Press, 1956; reissued with Introduction by Jose A. Argüelles, Shambala Publications, Berkeley, Calif., U.S.A., 1976 (192 pp. $ 3.95)

can religion centres upon the father-figure of Quetzalcoatl, a mystic symbol part bird, part serpent, very nearly approaching the concept of Garuda, the golden snake-eating Sun-bird of Indian mythology. Quetzalcoatl is the aesthetic or divine symbol of the eternal meeting of two opposites (*Dyāvā-Pṛthivyau* in the Veda) so essential for the unity of life. *Quetzal,* the bird with shining plumes, signifies the sky, while *Coatl* is the serpent, which cannot rise above the earth. The idea of "Burning Water" expressed through the figure of Tlaloc (the god of Rain) wearing a fire-coloured wig is again a symbol for the dynamics of the union of two opposites. It is the basis of all creation, spiritual as well as material.

Historically, Quetzalcoatl is the founder of Nahuatl culture. In his great deeds as the ruler who united Mexico, he would remind us of Śrī-Rāma. It is from him that all Mexican rulers claim proud descent.

In his down-to-earth folk aspect, he creates man with his own blood and finds food for him in the form of corn. The clever ants hide a few grains of corn in their nest-hole. Quetzalcoatl turns himself into an ant and steals the corn stored by the ants and gives it to men. This parable is very close to the delightful stories connected with the baby Krishna and his pranks of stealing the *gopis'* (cowherd women's) butter. As teacher of men, Quetzalcoatl teaches them the arts and crafts, the weaving of cotton cloth, mosaics with shining *quetzal* plumes, and the science of measuring time and the study of the revolutions of the stars. The Aztecs inherited their most accurate calendar from their predecessors. It consisted of 18 months of 20 days each and a short period of 5 days devoted entirely to religious feasting and festivities.

The author has convincingly shown how Quetzalcoatl was the source of all Mexican spiritual life as well. His teachings stressed "inner perfection and spiritual life as the supreme goals." As with the Vedic Indian, religion for the ancient Mexican was the subtle relationship seen and felt with the entire universe — the sun, moon, stars, and other objects of nature. In a delightful folk myth Quetzalcoatl is a chaste king until the day when he gets drunk and commits a carnal act. As atonement for the sin, he abandons his kingdom and dies voluntarily by fire (fire is a purifying agent). His body burnt in the ordeal, his heart rises to become the planet Venus. As Venus, Quetzalcoatl is the mystic point of the soul's journey downward into the darkness of earthly existence, only to rise once again to be gloriously reunited with the supreme godhead. The movement of the planet Venus in the sky thus correctly describes the soul's eternal journey.

Unfortunately the militaristic Aztecs extended this highly refined and spiritual Nahuatl philosophy to a grotesque conclusion in terms of the

physical world. The intricate doctrine of the four departed suns (of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water, bearing a striking parallel to the *Pañca-mahābhūtas* and the *Daśāvatāras* of India) together with the fifth sun of Movement (whence man is created), so clearly and cleverly picturized in the Aztec calendar, was misunderstood by them. The fifth Sun as the centre of the quadrangle of the four departed Suns signified "true knowledge to be a search within, a movement inward to attain union with godhead." The warlike Aztecs took it as the physical human heart and invented the barbaric practice of wrenching out human hearts for sacrificial offerings. In this the Aztecs were no more to be blamed than we in our way. As the author poignantly remarks:

> Belonging to a civilization whose activities are measured by external facts, in terms of events taking place only in the temporal universe, it is not easy for us to understand motives dictated by the will to rise out of such an existence, to reach beyond the terrestrial condition.

At times the Aztec scene was so gruesome that a spectator describes it thus: "Like the most ardent prayer this (torn out) heart so madly beating is an expression of man's mystic will to rise upward to God." When the Spaniards came, Mexico was being ruled by the all-powerful Moctezuma and the number of sacrifices was so great that the "temples looked like slaughter-houses." The Aztec empire owed its downfall to its hunger for power and glory, its lust for earthly things, its brutal and despotic militarism. During our short stay of three years in Mexico our Nahuatl friends told us time and again how alien the Aztecs were to everything Mishikan. The people always regarded them as enemies and later betrayed them to the Spaniards.

Present-day Nahuatls have preserved a charming memory of their own coming to Mishika. According to a legend in Chiapas and other southern states of Mexico, in times long ago a ship from India had anchored there and the local population is descended from the inmates of the ship. Their skin, features, hair-style, and dress is very much Indian, like ours. This I have seen for myself.

For insight into the Nahuatl mind and thought, Mme. Séjourné has given samples of its poetry. In it there is intense longing for the mysterious: "I weep, I grow sad, I am only a singer!" and there is nostalgia for lost unity:

> I offer, offer flowering Cocoa:
> that I may be sent to the house of the Sun!

The soul is compared to a flower or a butterfly, which looks like a flying flower:

If I could only sometimes carry flowers,
could adorn myself with them
in the place of the Fleshless!
I am saddened
only as a flower is man
honoured upon earth:

On and on goes the song, singing of delicate-petalled flowers, bright butterflies on the wing, and the all too brief pathos of it all — reminding us, as it were, of the highly poetic verses of Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti: "*Maraṇaḥ prakṛtiḥ śarīriṇām*" (Death indeed is the nature of corporeal beings) and "*Eko rasaḥ karuna eva*" (There is only one sentiment [in poetry], and that is pathos).

To Aldous Huxley the Nahuatl philosophy appeared very close to the philosophy of the *Gītā* and the Vedānta. The North American scholar G. Brinton went to the extent of calling the early Mexican expressions of religious belief "The American Rig-Veda." Like the Indians, the early Mexicans believed that death is not the end; it is only a transformation: "Like the changing into new clothes discarding old ones," says the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The Nahuatl knows that man is the incarnation of a celestial particle. The nurse tells the newborn baby, "This world in which you have arrived is only a place to develop" — to bud and to flower — "your true house is another." How close these ideas are to the ecstatic expressions of our own mystics, Ghanananda, Kabir, Raidas! The Nahuatl looked upon human existence as preparation for death. "True birth is release from the finite."

So far only ten per cent of Teotihuacan (*Teo*: *Deva, Can*: *Sthāna*; so, place or city of gods) has been explored. According to the author the remaining ninety per cent waiting to be discovered is going to throw a flood of new light on this lost civilization. Teotihuacan is a veritable storehouse of Mexican painting, sculpture, writing, and other arts. "It is like a vast poem, every detail an integral part of a highly inspired whole." It evokes the idea of human divinity — the place where the serpent became plumed and learnt to fly. The whole temple-like structure was in praise of the Supreme, closely interrelated with cosmic phenomena, as is visualized by the 365 heads in high relief adorning the shrine of Quetzalcoatl. The author, through a host of painstaking drawings and illustrations, has tried to explain the Nahuatl symbolic writing. Yet, with all this labour, this symbolism of line and figure remains largely undeciphered to date. The decoding of this, as well as of the Indus-Valley script, and the stationing of some eminent Indian scholars of the calibre of the late Raghuvira, S. K. Mazumdar, and R. K. Mukerji,

for considerable periods, may indeed lead to newer knowledge which would enrich the closely intertwined fabric of human relations.

As for *Burning Water,* it remains a fascinating and intense revelation of some aspects of the Aztec people and of the Nahuatl culture they so willingly adopted. The study would have been more complete, useful, and illuminating if the author had combined her European tools of research and investigation with an insight into the philosophy of the Vedas and the roots of the Sanskrit language. The story of man's origin and development, the outpourings of his thought and speech as preserved in the Vedic lore, would certainly help in a deeper and fuller understanding of the problem.

KAMALA RATNAM

The Ascending Spiral

Stop your yammering
that love must end —
no more joy,
no more beauty,
all gone,
all lost
in the abysm of death.
There are those of us
who know better.
You'll have the same thing
all over again,
but you'll have it in a life
on a higher level.
You'll have it more deeply,
and you'll know it more deeply
and in finer detail
and with more knowledge
and with greater awareness
of what it's all about.
This is a simple account
of the ascending spiral.

DANIEL SIMPKINS

RAMAKANT SINARI

Śrī-Aurobindo's Vision of the Ultimate Reality

[The first part of Dr. Ramakant Sinari's article appeared in THE ARYAN PATH, January-February 1977. We print below the second and concluding part.—ED.]

II

EVOLUTION-FOR-INTEGRATION is the main philosophical thesis in Śri-Aurobindo's metaphysics. For Śrī-Aurobindo Reality is a perpetual creativity starting from the inconscient matter and going toward the superconscient divine. Nothing in this process is unreal, contingent, or accidental. The World-Spirit or *Sat-cit-ānanda* (that is, *Brahman*), whose play or *līlā* the entire cosmic act is, is manifest in everything and "pulls" everything toward it. Thus every entity is potentially divine — it is capable of, and on its way toward, attaining the superconscient goal. The superconscient state is the destination of all existence.

Śrī-Aurobindo's evolutionism has the singular virtue of representing the purposefulness of Reality. In this respect, it is clearly distinguishable from the evolutionist concepts put forward by philosophers like S. Alexander and Henri Bergson. For Śrī-Aurobindo Reality unfolds itself with a certain inherent intentionality and, in the process of its self-unfolding, organizes itself for an absolutely integral and comprehensive goal. The evolution of the Real can therefore be felt through an inward-seeing act within one's own consciousness — an act aiming to attain the highest level of transparence, illumination, and integration. From this level Reality would disclose itself as a self-manifesting cohesive intuition.

Actually, human consciousness at any given moment manifests the immanent-transcendental dimensions of Reality. Although our immediate awareness is the awareness of our being in the world, our entire being is not consumed by this awareness. At its core, human life is a flight into the ultimately Real — it is an open act moving toward the absorption and synthesis of all its lower and dispersed stages. In his *The Synthesis of Yoga,* one of the most powerful works ever written on the mysterious "ladder" on which consciousness can be said to move upward, Śrī-Aurobindo recommends an intensification of our inward-seeing consciousness. When so intensified, consciousness gradually ascends towards the supra-sensuous, the supra-rational, the directly intuitible, and ultimately experiences a total integration of the ordinary states of mind and body. For Śrī-Aurobindo, the deep "spiritual intuition" to which Reality stands

disclosed in its total dynamism is the most harmonious state of our existential experience. In it the act of experiencing and the experienced itself, the act and the state of Reality, the emanations and the essence of the World-Spirit, dissolve in one complete whole. All distinctions merge in this whole as if the forward-moving universal mind-force sucks within it the entire diversity of beings.

Thus the ladder of consciousness from its ordinary level of sensation and intellection to its superconscient level is the mirror of the process of the Real. Śrī-Aurobindo says:

> Nothing to the supramental sense is really finite: it is founded on a feeling of all in each and of each in all: its sense definition ... creates no walls of limitation; it is an oceanic and ethereal sense in which all particular sense knowledge and sensation is a wave or movement or spray or drop that is yet a concentration of the whole ocean and inseparable from the ocean.[6]

For Śrī-Aurobindo Reality is the cosmic flow, the cosmic energy, the cosmic vitality manifesting itself through a myriad beings. The only way in which Reality can realize itself is by creating these beings. Human consciousness with its multiple states and experiences is itself the expression of the evolving Real.

There are no excesses in the evolutionary process of the Real. Matter, life, and mind, i.e. the principles or substrata which Reality emits as it ascends towards the supermind, are some kind of incarnation of Reality itself. Thus they are not the secondary stratum of existence. The doctrine of Reality or *Brahman* in the traditional thought in India according to which the world of our day-to-day experience is *māyā* or illusion did not interest Śrī-Aurobindo. For Śrī-Aurobindo the path of evolution is the path toward the integration of the Real. Nothing in our experience, therefore, can be said to be contingent in the Reality's total plan. It is out of spontaneity or sport (*līlā*) that Reality gives an expression to its innate potencies. The evolution of Reality is an act inherent to the very spiritual essence of Reality. Evolution, Śrī-Aurobindo holds,

> is not simply an increasingly complex configuration of matter and motion, presided over by chance. Nor is it the rattling-off of a chain forged innumerable years ago, presided over by an extra-cosmic divine mind. Nor is it the gradual emergence, in accidental fashion, of new qualities and superior values, all out of a void ... The process of evolution is the in-

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[6] Śrī-Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Śrī-Aurobindo International University Centre, Pondicherry, 1955, p. 989

finitely diversified self-determination of the essentially indeterminable reality.[7]

Evolution thus has a direction and meaning. Its destination is the supermind, the "Light of the Spirit," the highest form of consciousness called "inconscience." Reality reflects this destination throughout its evolutionary process. In other words, the ascent of Reality from its subconscient state to the superconscient state entails what Śrī-Aurobindo calls the involution of the supermind. The superconscient invites the subconscient matter and the activity of life and mind toward it. The earthly would not have ascended toward the divine, toward the ideal of Sat-cit-*ānanda,* had the latter not already spiritualized it. While explaining how the superconscient comes down and electrifies even the subconscient matter, Śrī-Aurobindo says:

> The nescience of Matter is a veiled, an evolved or somnambulist consciousness which contains all the latent powers of the Spirit. In every particle, atom, molecule, cell of Matter there lives hidden and works unknown all the omniscience of the Eternal and all the omnipotence of the Infinite.[8]

For a complete self-realization of the Real, physical existence is as necessary as the existence of spirt. The concept of the evolution-involution of the Real necessarily implies that the material or the earthly and the spiritual or the other-worldly are not two distinct domains within the structure of the Real. They form the parts of the integral whole of the Real. The material world therefore belongs to the growth of the Real. Śrī-Aurobindo asserts this when he remarks that evolution is "the creative adventure of the World Spirit in the unchartered ocean of inconscience so that the infinite possibilities inherent in reality may be infinitely expressed in material conditions."[9]

Now, since the entire cosmic act aims at total self-realization of the World-Spirit — that is, the attainment, by all existents, of the ideal of the divine — everything that is or happens in space and time must be regarded as in essence internal to the World-Spirit. The World-Spirit is the mirror of Reality. Through it the Real manifests its infinite ways of expressing itself. Therefore, to select a particular situation in the world and find fault with it is to look at it in a piecemeal manner. Reality does not admit of any permanent diversification — material or mental.

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[7] Haridas Chaudhuri's "The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo" in Haridas Chaudhuri (ed.), *The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1960, pp. 31-32

[8] Quoted by Satprem, *Sri Aurobindo*, Sri-Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry, 1968, p. 301

[9] Śrî-Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p. 33

The diversification is its casualness, for an understanding of whose exact significance one must intuit the evolutionary-involutionary conduct of the divine.

Śrī-Aurobindo's grasp of the meaning of the cosmic act of Reality or *Brahman* is something that dawns on his extraordinarily gnostic mind out of a kind of divine grace. One who goes through the pages of his *Life Divine, Savitri, The Human Cycle,* and *The Synthesis of Yoga* cannot help feeling that his linguistic pyramids have at their bottom the most intense awareness of the cosmic soul, of the unfolding of the transcendental, of the descent of the superhuman. The power of poetry in Śrī-Aurobindo's works is not an ordinary power. The whole impetus behind his language is supernatural, has a transcendental origin, that is, its spring is the act of the Absolute. The "original impetus" or vitality (*à la* Bergson), a self-manifesting fund of energy, percolates through his expressions and imagery, and seeks a communication with the inner awareness of his readers. The language here is only an inadequate medium behind which the creative and dynamic act of the superconscient's self-disclosure takes place.

Śrī-Aurobindo's conception of the evolution of the Real is not a simple unidirectional notion. The course of the subconscient matter to the superconscient spirit is in it retrogade. The thrust for the evolution originates from the superconscient itself. The superconscient is the Mother, the Supreme Spirit, the Divine, beckoning all forms of existence toward it. It is the life-force, the Divine Will, pervading the whole universe. It makes its presence felt in every department of Nature and human life. The activity of the cosmos, the growth of the organic world, the will-to-become of man are due to the impulse of the superconscient. The superconscient is the throb of life, the pulse of human desire and work, the very *raison d'être* of our moving-forward. It is spread through the entire spectrum of existence like an upward-lifting energy — an invitation from God, as it were.

Human consciousness is not the highest stage in creative evolution. It is within consciousness that the progression from the empirical to the transcendental, from the subconscient to the superconscient takes place. This progression is a journey from one's experience of the solidly existent world, that is, the world of static, intellectually apprehended externals, to the world of one's own inside. In every state or act of our mind we surpass ourselves as world-conscious beings and "flow" inward toward what can be described as the ultimate foundation of all. This foundation is the superconscient, the unverbalizable expanse of *Sat-cit-ānanda*. That the expanse is there as an elusive and metalinguistic

destination of human consciousness Śrī-Aurobindo had no doubt about. The most notable attempt that he made in the history of Indian philosophy is to articulate its process, its descent toward and call to the empirical.

RAMAKANT SINARI

On the Death of a Friend

H. T. Venables, University College, London, 1925-29

Can dreaded death with all its power destroy
his spirit with the stinking flesh that now
in its strict chemistry must first break down
and then dry slowly to a heap of dust?
Can it put out the flickering light that like
the holy flame burning before the Grail
signalled to us who knew him that behind
the laughter and the jokes, anger and pride
that passed like clouds and light across the deep
serene, the space of silence where the Real
burned in his spirit fierce, made him its own?
Grant that we do not know, or say death can
do this. Still in our own souls shines his flame
remembered. Twenty, forty years it grows,
clearer, perhaps, and whiter than it did
in him. So that at least in us he does
not sleep; anastasis as long as we
remain. But who can say the reason that the flame
burns clearer after forty years is not
because he too, across the unthought
spaces of the Real, shines brighter and we show
him as he is in his eternity?

EDWARD SARMIENTO

R. S. GILL

Science and Values

[Professor R. S. Gill is a new contributor whom we gladly welcome to our pages. In his comparatively brief essay, Professor Gill makes clear the essentials of his theme. His unhesitating commitment to the autonomous and categorical authority of values is notable. Particularly instructive is the view he takes of the duties of the whole man as against scientific man or valuational man.—ED.]

SCIENCE

THE tremendous and impressive structure of Science is the result of the union of passionate interest in detailed observation with equal devotion to abstract reasoning. Observation gives stubborn facts and reasoning makes use of logic and mathematics stretched to the utmost. Abstract reasoning, when checked against observation, gives the resulting theory the necessary foothold in concrete reality. Hence it is that it is the theory that the scientist values most. Huxley says: "The tragedy of science is to kill a beautiful hypothesis by an ugly fact." For the scientist, theory embodies the vision of reality for which he lives, imposing upon himself incredible labours. When Newton, enunciating his theory of gravitation, says that the force which pulls the apple to the ground is the same as that which carries the moon in its orbit round the earth and keeps the stars in their courses, he offers his vision of physical reality. The same is true of Einstein's theory of Relativity and the Quantum theory. Henceforth when we speak of Science we mean the theories of science.

VALUES

When we desire a thing we either desire it for the sake of something to which it will conduce or we desire it for itself. In the first case it is an instrumental value and, in the second, an intrinsic value. Quinine is desired because it prevents malaria; the prevention of malaria, because having malaria militates against health; health, because it is a means to happiness. Why, then, is happiness desired? Because it is happiness, desirable for itself. Here quinine is an instrumental value and happiness an intrinsic value. When we come to something which is desirable for itself, we can give no reason why it is desired; for to give a reason why a thing is desired is to specify something else for the sake of which it is desired. Hence intrinsic or ultimate values are intuitively perceived — and in saying this we are only saying that no reason can be given why they have value. The term "intuition" is apt to be suspect, but to say

that somebody knows something intuitively is only to say that he knows it otherwise than by observation and reasoning. This is so because values belong to an order of reality which we spiritually discern but cannot observe or grasp by discursive thought. The Platonic notion of "beholding" well fits that which is designated as "sensing of value."

The most important feature of the consciousness of values is that it puts people under obligation, an awareness of the thing that ought to be. If something is good we ought to promote it. By discovering the value of things, more especially the relative value of things, we also discover what ought to be. For if we find that one thing is better than another, we also discover that that thing ought to be rather than the other.

"Ought," issuing from the consciousness of value, takes the form of an imperative or commandment to act in a certain way, e.g. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It is an imperative which is inescapably or unconditionally laid upon us. That which ought to be done, ought to be done for no other reason than that it ought to be done. If, on being asked to be good, one raises the question "Why should I be good?" the only final answer that can be given is "Because you ought to be good" or "Because it is good to be good." There is no getting away from "you ought simply because you ought." Thus the authority of "ought" is unquestionable, categorical, absolute.

Now what "ought" absolutely or unquestionably has is only the *authority* or the *right* to make obligatory demands. But it has not the necessary *strength* to force us to carry out in practice what it commands. Values do not coerce. They do not dominate reality. Over and against the real, they signify only a claim which we are free to repudiate in practice. This is the freedom of man. Speaking of the "ought" character of religious experience, Whitehead says, "It compels recognition but is permissive of disregard." This sums up beautifully the point I am trying to make.

To values belongs somehow the tendency to reality. "Ought-to-*be*" belongs to their very essence. Also they exert a pulling power over the mind that knows them. "To know Him is to love Him." They are not only objects which we can know but also goals or ends which we should strive after. *They are that through which anything is worth striving for.* They draw us forward and pull us upward, giving us strength to rise above ourselves. It is only in so far as values are dynamic and take the initiative in establishing a relation with us, bidding us know them and embody them in our lives, that, responding to their challenge, we shall be enabled to rise above ourselves.

It is symptomatic of our spirituality that we feel the pull of values, are drawn forward and upward by them and can establish a relation with them.

SCIENCES AND VALUES

I wish to maintain that the scientist *qua* scientist can make no value judgements. His sole concern is with matters factual. This point of view was expressed by the famous German sociologist Max Weber by the dictum that science must be "value-free." Values alone constitute ultimate goals or ideals. Hence the posting of them is an activity outside of science. The scientist must presuppose some goal before he can tell the sociologist what are the best means for achieving it. In the words of Whitehead, "Ideals lie beyond matter-of-fact." As the scientist's sole concern is with matter-of-fact, he can have no say in the matter of values or ideals. Social science cannot, therefore, establish what goals human beings ought to pursue. "Ought" is attached only to values, not facts. The question is sometimes raised: Are values not facts? Yes and no both. Values are more than mere facts. They are facts to the extent that they are a factual description of the moral life, of human rights and duties, and what actually constitutes a good or virtuous life. But values are facts of a particular kind. They are something more than a description of moral life or human goals. They are at the same time the delineation of ideals. An ideal is an ideal precisely because it is something meant to be realized or carried out in conduct. "Ought" is attached to it. It tells us what ought to be rather than merely what always actually is. The scientist's sole concern is with what always actually is.

"Normative" means pertaining to an ideal or ideal expressed as "ought." "You ought to keep your promises" is a normative proposition because it contains the term "ought." It embodies an ideal. "You promised to pay back the loan" is a factual proposition because it reports the fact of your having made a promise. By combining these two propositions we can deduce a normative conclusion (containing the term "ought") as shown below:

i. You ought to keep your promises (Major Premise)
ii. You promised to pay back the loan (Minor Premise)
Therefore:
iii. You ought to pay back the loan (Conclusion)

Here "ought" in the conclusion is derived from "ought" in the major premise. Without its occurrence in the major premise it could not occur in the conclusion. This is logic. Hence, logically speaking, a normative

conclusion can follow only from a normative major premise. It is this simple point of logic that is expressed by the dictum "you cannot deduce what *ought to be* from what *is*." Or, "From *is* to *ought* there is no road." To strive to spin normative conclusions out of purely factual descriptive premises is to strive to produce a rabbit out of a silk-hat.

To clinch the point we give below a few lines from Einstein:

> Knowledge of what *is* does not open the door to what *should be* ... Science produces knowledge and means of action. It leads to methodical action if definite goals are set up in advance. For the function of setting up goals and passing statements of value transcends its domain.

In his Gifford Lectures Sherrington observes that "science distinguishes true from false, not good from evil. This evidently makes the man of science, as such, not the whole man but a fractional man." The man of science concentrates on what *is* but closes his eyes to what *ought to be*. He strives after the matter-of-fact but ignores ideals. Sherrington continues:

> The whole man must combine his scientific part-man with his human rest. Where his scientific part-man assures the whole man of something and his valuational part-man declares that something to be evil, it is for the whole man in his doing not to leave it at that but to fight evil. Otherwise his scientific knowledge and his value judgement become two idle wheels spinning without effect whereas evolution brought them into the world each to give the other effect. But for that he would not have them. Without that he would not retain them. May we suppose then that man's mind has arisen that he may do so?

Before closing I want to guard against the impression that science has no role to play in the realization of values. Values give us goals or ultimate ends. Science furnishes us with the means of achieving these ends. If you ask the scientist just which way one ought to go, the only answer he can give is that given by the Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*: "That depends a good deal on where you want to go." We must decide by means other than scientific just where it is that we should go. But once this decision is taken, science can tell us how to go and the fastest and safest means of getting there.

R. S. GILL

Celebration and Dialogue

The Atonement Friars, a Roman Catholic congregation of priests and brothers living in the Fransciscan tradition, have as their principal work the restoration of visible unity among all Christians. Founded in 1898 in New York, the order founded the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 1908; since the Second Vatican Council and the ecumenical work of Pope John XXIII, it has widened its concerns to embrace the relationship of Christianity to other major world religions. Now closely linked with Westminster Cathedral under Archbishop Hume, the London community, at its 1977 conference on "Christian Mission" examined key issues of religion in the global context today.

Bishop Trevor Huddleston of Stepney, formerly Bishop of Masasi in Tanzania, stressed that

> in our interdependent world, God's truth that men should love one another is now obvious on every side. The obdurate resistance to this truth, on the part of many individuals, groups and nations, is massive evidence of how original sin is at work in the world. ...
>
> We have only one earth, but man acts as if he does not believe it. The Western nations, those presumed steeped in the Christian tradition, are the worst offenders. We need a fundamental loyalty to the planet earth as human beings, and doubly so as Christians, for this is God's creation. The conflicts of race and colour, dividing man from man, are massive challenges to human survival worldwide. When a British politician uses the issues of immigration for his own ends, he is heard not only in Britain but in Africa and throughout the world; he is heard to attack black men everywhere, for our interdependent world is linked by instant communication media.

The role of Christianity and other religions in a pluralistic and increasingly secularized society was most meaningfully explored by Miss Pauline Webb, formerly Vice-Moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, and also a senior official of the Methodist Missionary Society responsible for liaison with Africa and the Caribbean. The role of Christianity and other major faiths had to be seen in relation to a secular society "which lives for most of the time as though God did not exist," and which has, "as one of its most dangerous features, the dearth of celebration." The feasts and festivals celebrated by the religions of the ethnic minority groups were part of the answer, and new forms of Christian worship another contribution. The celebrations of other faiths, now bursting in upon British society in the splendour of ancient cultures and traditions, should be seen as "signposts, reminding humanity that they belong to a greater Kingdom than that of the immediate moment."

> Our ancestors were wise enough to recognise the validity of the celebrations of the seasons and even to baptise them as Christian festivals. The feast that celebrated the longing for light in the middle of winter was seen to be an appropriate celebration of the coming of that Light which lightens everyone coming into the world. Can we see the same kind of significance in the Hindu Dipavali, the Festival of Light? What have we to learn from the Muslim observance of Ramadan, a period of fasting and prayer? Can we affirm the gaiety and festivity of a Caribbean carnival once intended to signify the end of the feasting and the beginning of the discipline of Lent?

The acceptance of such celebration in a multi-faith context, and the popularity among Christians of such events as all-night vigils and pilgrimages, pointed to a deep yearning for festival amid the flatness of the secular city. The fact that many people normally outside religion turned to the Church for family rituals, especially christenings, weddings, and funerals, was a subconscious acknowledgement "that the Church is a sign amidst their routine and mundane existence that life is charged with meaning and mystery."

In Britain and the wider world alike, Christians could no longer regard other faiths as the "target of our missionary activity"; "we must have that humility and openness which make possible a dialogue which becomes a mutual process of learning and enrichment." Such dialogue did not in any way diminish full commitment to one's own faith, but rather

> leads to the kind of creative interaction in which one's own faith is tested, refined and sharpened. Dialogue is essential in order to dispel the misunderstandings and prejudices of the past created by our negative attitude to other faiths, and thereby create a healthy atmosphere where we can receive as well as give, listen as well as proclaim.

Dialogue was essential if the institutional Churches of the West were to discover the Asian face of Jesus as the suffering servant. In Britain, every Christian tradition and local church was in danger of a false self-sufficiency:

> We must develop a mind of counter-consciousness. We need an awareness that our particular experience of Christian community is fragmentary and partial. We need the enrichment of every possible ecumenical, inter-racial and cross-cultural encounter.

Closely related in theme was the March 1977 inter-faith dialogue on religion and racial harmony, held at the London University Catholic Chaplaincy under the auspices of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, with Christian, Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu speakers participating. Mr. David Lane, Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality and a member of the Church of England, stressed positive dialogue and practical co-operation between the major religious communities.

> In our view of God we shall find differences, but our view of man should be similar. It is very important that the religious forces mark out their common ground in the effort to build racial harmony, especially on the basis of a common understanding of the value of humanity and the common human family.

Dr. I. Pasha, General Secretary of the Union of Muslims in Britain, said that Islam condemned all forms of racial discrimination: proper religious attitudes of tolerance and the teaching of true compassion were more important than law in promoting inter-racial understanding. "Harmony within society expresses that harmony within oneself which can only come through true religion," commented Professor J. Singh of the London Sikh Community.

BRIAN G. COOPER

New Books and Old

A Perspective on Indian Civilization*

The purpose of the author is to forward and direct the progress of change in India. He is a modernist and believes that a "Pan-functional Induced Progress on the philosophy of Realo-Idealist Humanism is the *only one* suitable for India if she is to develop on her own, not as a client state."

During the past twenty-five years Oroon Kumar Ghose has patiently assembled and ordered facts relevant to the study of civilization. His field is wide and this book is a compendium of knowledge. Almost every sphere of human activity is subjected to categorization and classification. Toynbee listed twenty distinct civilizations and his classification was widely criticized. The seven stages isolated by Morgan were also criticized but were not entirely rejected. Oroon Kumar Ghose postulates ten.

It is generally agreed that a survey of all civilization and a comparison of particular civilizations should be attempted; and, as these studies proceed, gradients and continua are revealed between primitive and civilized cultures, and varieties of civilization are discerned. The concept of civilization is apt to become more useful in terms of a set of processes than as an initial category for sorting out societies and cultures. Necessary as such analyses may be for a particular culture, they do not offer suitable answers to the historian's and anthropologist's questions. What is the best kind of person? Who is civilized? How is a perfect man to be defined?

Oroon Kumar Ghose believes in the Stages-of-Civilization theory. For him each stage has its own consciousness and values and institutions; its own High Civilization in the fields of science and technology, economics, politics, social relations, ideology, and culture. Economics is dominant and determines the character of the whole complex package that goes with each Stage. His approach has the precision of a computer; it is objective and scientific. The rational is stressed with the confidence of an accountant. Yet the irrational tends to erupt in the lives of individuals and of nations at moments that may be extremely inconvenient for scientists, in the most unexpected ways. History is neither as cut and dried as we should like nor as predictable. Diffidence is in order.

The Humanist question is how culture in the sense of the cultivation of the arts and literature may further the self-realization of individual men and women and the mutual understanding of peoples. The arts and literature are used to achieve "humanity" both in the sense of individual perfection and in that of mutual love. We owe our discoveries to individual men and women, but new information and skill can only be propagated and disseminated in a favourable cultural medium. Many instances could be cited of promising knowledge which has so far failed to get a footing in civilization. The veneration of ancestors in India forms a highly practical obstacle, for instance, to the introduction of Western institutions. An invention or

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**The Changing Indian Civilization (A Perspective on India).* By OROON KUMAR GHOSE. (Minerva Associates (Publications) Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta. Vol. I, 500 pp. Vol. II, 432 pp. 1976. Rs. 75.00 each)

discovery or the rectification of an ancient error does not become a part of civilization until it has been accepted and added to habits of thought and action. Plenty of shocking tales can be recalled of professional and popular opposition to innovations on grounds which seem grotesque. Civilization is at best precarious. It can increase indefinitely but also drop off tremendously, as the history of man amply testifies. It is only uncivilized man that can go on indefinitely. Our total social and traditional heritage would fall away totally and immediately if amnesia were to overcome mankind.

Shri Ghose believes change can be induced and guided in the desired direction by the operation of five Key Forces, actual and potential: geography, natural resources, geopolitics, internal class forces, and the weight of tradition. He aims at clarifying perceptions, making accurate distinctions, and developing imaginative knowledge of alternate possibilities and wishes to sharpen our awareness of our own and others' environment. He has collected much evidence in support of his assumptions. But the assumptions people are most prone to take for granted are their unrevised childhood impressions. This book is dedicated to the young, and he recommends that the comparative study of civilizations be made compulsory. These two volumes are evidently intended as a textbook for such a study. Shri Ghose hopes study of this kind will dispel myths about the Past and the Present, help to assess the Present realistically, and suggest guidelines for the future, against a world background and converging societies. A sequel to these two volumes will be out shortly, *The Modernization of India*. The author believes in creative altruism and World Brotherhood. These, he says, are our goal.

But can what he calls Configurational Dynamics be applied to people or, for that matter, cultures or civilizations? All are living organisms. Humanism is not abstract. People cannot be manipulated. Nor can they be motivated or activated by mechanical devices like T.V. Such a dispassionate approach tends to make men feel like "specimens" of various stages of civilization rather than human beings seeking solutions to human problems. The psychic and emotional element in man seems to have been played down. Shri Ghose definitely underestimates the strength of, for instance, an emotion like nationalism. Perhaps he considers it out of place in a book of this kind, but when he advocates the converting of temples into museums by the State what are we to think? What about mosques and churches? Religion is one of the forces by which men perfect themselves. I can think of no quicker way than such an attempt to turn India into a Vietnam or break the whole subcontinent down into bits. Yet, he says, change should be peaceful but quick, with world-scale trends giving perspective and direction. Would it be out of place to suggest Shri Ghose appears to be less in touch with psychic reality than he might be? The ways of all living creatures are manifold and astonishing. So far man has stumbled along, more enslaved by his past than liberated by it for further advances. A culture is a way of life of a human group. The transformation of Paurāṇic Hinduism into Vaijñānik Vedāntism might be a desirable development but it is not the duty of the State to bring it about. Change by a natural process of unfoldment of the human psyche may be slow, but rapid change through mass-communication media will be neither deep nor lasting. On the contrary, it may result in a confusion detrimental alike to change, continuity, and permanence.

LILA RAY

The Search Within: A Course in Meditation. By CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS. (Sheldon Press, London. 160 pp. 1977. Cloth £4.95; Paperback £2.50)

This latest book by Judge Christmas Humphreys is, as he is careful to emphasize, *not* a book on Meditation and its methods, but a course in arousing awareness of the true Self within, for which Meditation will then become its normal way of life.

Set thus apart from present-day cults, it is written in the form of twelve "Themes" under such headings as "Self and Not-so Self," "Right Action, Reaction and Non-Action," "Karma, the Law of Harmony," "Dharma, the Law of Service," leading finally to "The Approach to Enlightenment," each being followed by a number of questions to put to oneself. It is a guide-book for those concerned not with experiences obtained through Meditation, but with spiritual development and the slow progress "from the world of illusion to the world of Reality."

Given from his youth to "the long process of Self-finding," the writer's wide reading throughout the years enriches us with a wealth of invaluable quotations from the Buddhist and other scriptures, from Greek philosophy, from English poetry (his own included), from the writings of H. P. Blavatsky, W. Q. Judge, Sri Krishna Prem, Sir James Jeans, Santana, and many more. The Themes themselves, and most of the material, have emerged, he tells us, from forty-five years' study in the Zen class of the Buddhist Society, which he founded.

Today Meditation is a popular study, but does it measure up to the standards of this wise and learned writer?

> A trained and disciplined mind under the direct control of the will is, [he warns us] "a prerequisite for true Meditation...only when a disciplined mind has been successfully directed to the building up of moral character is it safe or wise to embark on Meditation.

Furthermore, "right motive is vital," a point made repeatedly by W. Q. Judge throughout his writings.

Theosophists will appreciate the inclusion of a goodly number of extracts from these; also the tribute to Madame Blavatsky: "that great writer," through whom alone "the twin doctrines of Karma and Rebirth first became known to the Western Mind." Her aura is about the Buddhist Society of today; for when the young Christmas Humphreys founded it in 1924 it was as the Buddhist Lodge of the Theosophical Society. And it is in the spirit alike of the Buddha and of H.P.B. that this latest book to come from his pen

> is designed for the use of anyone who is not wedded to any particular school or method in the search for the Self, or Mind, or Essence, or Light within.

J. N. BURNETT

The Teachings of the Magi: A Compendium of Zoroastrian Beliefs. By R. C. ZAEHNER. (Sheldon Press, London. 156 pp. Re-published 1975. £ 3.50)

The purpose of this book is to present briefly to the reader the main tenets of the ancient religion of Zoroaster taken from the few surviving sacred books. These are known as the Avesta.

The first and by far the most important are the *Gāthās* or "odes," giving the doctrine of divine wisdom as manifested to the prophet and preached by him. Next are the *Yashts*, or "sacrificial hymns," which, as the author points out, relapse into a polytheism and paganism quite contrary to the Prophet's teachings. The

Vendidad is a treatise on ritual impurity, of much later origin.

Zoroastrianism is based on three simple tenets, Good thoughts, Good words, and Good deeds; for these comprise in themselves every virtue. It is a practical religion, totally against asceticism or hedonism, seldom concerned with mysticism; and it has been said that Zoroastrianism teaches one how to live, whereas other religions teach one how to die.

In Zoroastrianism, virtue lies in observing the Golden Mean, i.e. avoiding the two extremes of excess and deficiency. To quote the author, "The essence then of the Zoroastrian ethic is 'nothing in excess': it is essentially a gentleman's ethical code of moderation and good manners." Justice and order play a very imortant role in the religion, the King being the protector of the faith.

On the subject of dualism, Zaehner quotes at length from the *Shikand Gumānī Vazār* written by Mardan-Farrukh. Farrukh very logically argues that God, being perfect, cannot create evil; but as evil undoubtedly exists it must flow from another source, and that is Ahriman the Devil.

The Zoroastrian God is a good God, therefore all man's sufferings must stem from Ahriman. Thus, in Zaehner's words, man "has the comfort of knowing that he is not being tormented by an all-powerful Being who is his own creator." To impute evil, even indirectly, to a supreme God is heresy. Dualism, based on this assumption, relieves God of the responsibility of all the evil that exists in this universe.

For the Zoroastrian, the soul and the body form a harmonious whole, the unity of which is temporarily disrupted by death but will be restored at the Resurrection.

Zaehner notes the striking similarity between the Zoroastrian and the Christian doctrines of the future life, and maintains that in this belief it is with some justification that Christianity is held to be indebted to the older religion. Both believe in the judgement of the departed soul, in the Resurrection, and in a Saviour, or Sōshyans as the Zoroastrians call him, who will eventually establish a reign of everlasting bliss.

ROSHAN KOTHAWALA

Consciousness: A Western Treatment of Tibetan Yoga. By E. GRAHAM HOWE. (The Author, London. 31 pp. 1975. 45*p*.)

On completing this booklet, the seventy-eight-year-old Eric Graham Howe had "no more to say," as he told a friend, and died suddenly three days later. His death, as had been his life, was timely.

The booklet has as much "meat" as most books ten times as long, its four sections full of insights, and provocative statements about "The Stuff of Consciousness," "Charisma, Spiritual or 'Faith' Healing and Exorcism," "Experiential Time," and "If God Is Love?"

As he often did in his speaking and writing, he puts "mother" in her place, which is

> *here*, because she is of the material order of dvaita, twoness, sexuality and materiality, and not to the original order of the creative Father, which is a-dvaita, not-twoness; which is non-evidential spirituality.

The duties of a mother are obvious, he once observed; to be a father is more difficult, as the man looks at his wife arranging all the needful *things* for the family and wonders what it is he should *do*. But he must find out; without the FATHER's authority and encouragement we come to disaster. And yet — balance is all. Too much FATHER, like too much "mother," also leads to disaster.

"Hysteria is an emotional disorder directed regressively towards a maternal 'haven,' but schizophrenia is a spiritual disorder directed regressively towards a paternal 'Heaven.'" On this argument, as he once declared, most *yogis* are schizophrenic.

Unusual for a psychiatrist to declare (though less so than when he came to Harley Street in 1931), as Howe does, that the heart of healing is not a school or group but spiritual reality. And it is not every Freudian who not only states that "The Ultimate Reality can be experienced" but who has had that experience.

After travelling in Burma and Ceylon in 1953 I decided to follow my original plan and returned to India, where I went io the University of the Forest at Rishikesh on the Upper Ganges to receive further instruction, this time in Hindu aspects of meditation, instead of the Buddhist forms of practice which I had previously studied. What mattered to me most was not any verbal instruction, but the ice-green flowing waters of the Ganges, which had come straight down from the Himalayan snows. For a large part of every day I remained on the bank of the river in meditation. One evening as the sun was setting, I found an unknown little man sitting beside me, who I realized was silently imparting secrets. Eventually I went back to the shuttered darkness of my hut to meditate again and quite suddenly I knew that I had arrived! The whole experience only lasted for a flash and if asked subsequently to describe it, I could only say that, "it was *cold*!"...More recently, after many years of blindly groping exploration, I have come to a more satisfactory conclusion, as I have seen more clearly with an inner vision that I never had before. Quite humbly and sanely, without any odd experience of ecstasy, I can claim that I have seen inside the mind of God and been joined within the all-loving heart of the Father.

It is on the basis of such experience that he concludes, for example, that exorcism should *never* be attempted, that evil cannot be exorcised because "it cannot be set apart from a person's whole system of behaviour or state of mind." A pioneer in Britain of the mingling of Eastern mysticism with Western psychology, Howe was for many years one of the few psychiatrists (the only psychiatrist?) to acknowledge evil as a fact. While others "explained" wicked behaviour as, for example, a "reaction formation," Howe would say that evil is spiritual, that it is on a different dimension from extreme badness, that "it is an absolute outsider which never will come in except to destroy, however much we may befriend it."

Howe is particularly stimulating when he writes about time, the only "hobby" he ever had. Starting with the statement that TIME and ENERGY (he uses capital letters for all statements of non-duality) have been neglected areas of our experience, he tells us, as simply, that time is *not* space, and that in our inner, subjective world of experience, time is not linear but cyclical: "...as all good poets know, its end is its beginning." Then, using the framework of the *maṇḍala* and the "so-called elements of fire, air, water and earth" (it is very like Howe to add the "so-called"), he writes of the Hindu caste system; Jung's four functions; creative evolution; the *chakram* of the Buddha's flower sermon; and his own views on prophets, memory, psychic sensitivity, images, suffering, etc.—all in relation to time. The heading of the last part of this section is an indication of the main consideration of Howe's life: "All time is only relative to eternity."

Most interesting for some people will be the sixteen "Controversial New Ideas." Even those who consider themselves "up-to-date" or "advanced" might find much to ponder in Howe's, as usual, deceptively simple language—deceptively, because we have become so used to psychology books having so much jargon and so many long words as to make them incomprehensible at times that we suspect a simply written book cannot be a "real" psychology book.

Some might disagree with his use

of the word "new": do we say that ideas are new even if they have been in currency for two thousand years, as these ideas, *in different forms,* have been? Perhaps it is better to ask whether they are new to us — not whether we might have heard the idea expressed but whether we have felt it in ourselves. Consider this one of the sixteen, while remembering that Howe means exactly what he says: "On any level, Consciousness is undivided (a-dvaita) but it creates divisibility (dvaita) in the world of appearances." Old hat? But have you really reflected on the word "any"? . . . And have you seen his sixteenth point expressed anywhere else?

The present development of Consciousness heralds the advent of a new age and although it is generalized, and specifically lacking in any single leadership, it may be regarded for that reason as the second coming of The Christ, or Consciousness principle.

What many may find his most provocative statement is that he considers Christ's work as done. Two thousand years ago He announced to us not only His own divinity but the divinity of all mankind. Since the time when he lived on earth as a man, human freedom has eroded political authority, until today we know enough of the true meaning of relationship and communication in human affairs to continue, *ourselves,* the work He started. As Howe keeps on saying, it is up to us:

We are gradually coming to realize that humanity, civilization and the very existence of this planet is approaching a crisis of unparalleled proportions. Remedies are offered in legion, but usually they are only ineffective short-cut escape routes, anxiously grasped rather than facing the actual facts. But surely facts are only a state of mind, which is what determines our attitude towards and action about the facts, whatever they may be. The following pages examine our varying *states* of mind and consider whether and how they may be changed. ... This communication claims to be nothing less than an intuitively inspired statement of our current need for timely action.

In the last words he wrote, "Only thus can our sanity and wholeness be restored, and there be peace in the world amongst men, who are the most difficult to train of all God's creatures."

But you don't have to agree. Unlike the proponents of most religions and schools of psychology, but like Howe in his ten influential books written between 1931 and 1975, "the intention is not that the reader should agree." He is content if he makes the reader think.

As usual, his glossary is idiosyncratic, "a summary of names for the 'nameless' ": while the point of the page "What is or is not, POLARITY?" is to show that polarity (e.g. male/female) promotes energy; opposites (e.g. saint/sinner) promote change; and difference (e.g. Christian/Muslim) leads only to confusion.

Love is the answer. "The gift of life is the gift of love: it is all given as 'charisma,' radiant, glowing, warm like summer sunshine from the vital centre of the creative FATHER-source." Love is

a condition of *being*...love indeed is not necessarily *doing* anything...the greatest fault that love can show is in its attempt to fix anything, even words—or still worse any one! — as property for me, as being mine.

Do such words seem trite? Then we must remember that a lifetime's study and experience lie behind them, that Howe's ability to *be* simple is the strongest evidence of the depth of his knowledge. But if simplicity is not enough and we want a task we can find it in understanding *thoroughly* this sentence: "All errors of human behaviour are faults in the management, and distribution of energy, which is why yoga or energy control is so important."

To those familiar with Howe's approach to life, the ideas are the same as usual, yet "different." As Howe used to say, he had only one thing

to say, his task being to find different ways of saying it. As Dr. R. D. Laing wrote of him: "His writing is Existential and is Zen. Perhaps we are now ready to enjoy his simplicity and appreciate his subtlety. ..."

Let us hope so.

BRYCE MCKENZIE SMITH

Indian Conception of Values. By M. HIRIYANNA. (Kavyalaya Publishers, Mysore. 372 pp. 1975. Rs. 60.00; £8.00; $20.00)

Considered to be the *magnum opus* of Dr. Hiriyanna, one of the most revered and authentic exponents of the spirit and the substance of Indian philosophy, this work establishes the value-character of philosophy in India. Pursuit of Knowledge of the Reality is indeed legitimate in its own field, especially in the mental, but it is the practical consequences of that Knowledge that are paramount for the evolving being that is man.

The author points out that *value* is a truth that obtains at all levels of creation, even material objects showing their preference for one way over the other (p. 6 fn.). He distinguishes between lower values and higher values, and traces the bridge that connects them. After an introductory discussion on Value in general, Dr. Hiriyanna deals with the subject under the categories of the true, the good, the ultimate, the beautiful; the theories of realistic, idealistic, and absolutist philosophies; Ethics; Absolute Value and *Mokṣa*; and Aesthetic Value, i.e. Beauty in Nature and in Art.

Among the several notable points on which he focuses attention are the sources of *Dharma* in the *Ṛta* of the Vedas (pp. 150-1) and the adumbration of *Karma* in the *iṣṭapūrtā* in the ancient hymns (p. 170). His defence of the relevance of beauty in art to the ultimate value of *Mokṣa* is a fine tribute to the aesthete in the uncompromising philosopher who authors this profound treatise.

M. P. PANDIT

Dreams: Visions of the Night. By DAVID COXHEAD and SUSAN HILLER. (Thames and Hudson, London. 96 pp. 1976. 110 illustrations, 24 in colour. Paperback, £2.25)

The beautifully produced series "Art and Imagination" to which this book belongs is a sign of the times: for it explores what has, until fairly recently, been widely labelled as superstition — e.g. alchemy, astrology, Celtic mysteries, magic, Tantra, and Tao. On this subject of dreams, much of the text and many of the illustrations deal with traditional lore.

The text of the introduction, under the heading "Visions of the Night," begins by describing and discussing a myth of the Uitoto Indians of Colombia, in which "the creation of the world is achieved through the action of a dream."

The section "The Science of Dreams" (pp. 5-16) presents the Greek, Biblical, and Islamic traditions, followed by ethnographic traditions. The sub-section on Indian traditions (which, curiously, includes Tibetan Buddhism) treats mainly of the *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad's* four states of consciousness: waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the transcendental *turiya* state.

The theories of Freud and Jung are compared — Freud, backward-looking (the removal of ills from the past); Jung, convinced that "the dream's purpose is the discovery of

self."

"The Creative Dreamer" gives examples of the inspiration that may come through in dreams, of knowledge transcending normal consciousness. Induced or incubated dreams for healing purposes in the Aesculapian cult, telepathic dreams, and premonitions are also touched upon.

"The Awakened Dreamer," however, evokes questions about the techniques mentioned, for obtaining continued self-consciousness in the dream state. The authors recognize that the left-hand Tantra technique of visualizing god-images till they seem "real" in dream is just another aspect of materialism. But it should be pointed out that *prāṇāyama* (concentration on awareness of a specific threefold breathing process), which is given as a more abstract alternative, could well, lacking a genuine teacher, unbalance the inner constitution of the practitioner, if taken in the dead-letter, purely physical sense. This last is repudiated by the great spiritual teachers, such as Śaṁkarācārya, in his *Aparokṣānubhūti* and his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*. Another teacher has written: "Beware of taking esoteric works on Yoga literally. They all require a key."

The authors recognize that thhe dream state has to be transcended though its laws (differing from physical laws) need to be learnt, and the "reality" of its illusions experienced. This recalls the Northern Buddhist classic translated by H. P. Blavatsky as *The Voice of the Silence*, in which the Hall of Probationary Learning is filled with the temptations that its "psychic-dream" illusions offer. The suggested identification of astral projection or out-of-the-body experiences with "conscious dreams" is itself queried by the authors (p. 92). Certainly, in the ordinary dreaming state, the subtle, inner astral body does not separate from the physical body, as is the case in out-of-the-body experiences. The *Māyāvī-rūpa* (the astral as illusion-body) can even appear objectively to third persons, themselves in the waking state. The authors cite the experiences of light to which many out-of-the-body experiments and "conscious dreamers" testify, yet do not appear to have sufficiently researched the *ākāśa* of the Hindus, the "astral light" of the Kabbalists and the original Theosophical writers, with its many planes and sub-planes of subjective consciousness and corresponding degrees of subtler matter, energy, and powers. Such research would clarify the subjects of dreams, memory, premonitions, telepathy, astral projection, and many other phenomena.

This thought-provoking book should lead one to question further — not only the theories and facts offered, but one's own ethical stamina — before rushing fascinatedly into half-glimpsed states, the inner "heavens and hells" with their potentialities for good or ill.

L. MARR

The Myth of Freedom and the Way of Meditation. By CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA. Ed. by JOHN BAKER and MARVIN CASPER. Illustrated by GLEN EDDY. (Shambhala, Berkeley and London. 176 pp. 1976. $3.95)

The nearly forty chapters of this book are adaptations from talks given by Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, the Buddhist monk now residing in the West; and they all emphasize in one way or another how all our attitudes, preconceptions, and even spiritual practices are only chains binding us to repetitive patterns of frustration and despair. "As long as one's approach to spirituality is based upon enriching ego," observes the author, "it is spiritual materialism, a suicidal process rather than a creative one."

Written in an easy, racy style, the book is likely to appeal to the young modern mind, unaccustomed to serious, abstruse speculations, but not without interest in enquiring into the meaning of life. The author masterfully tackles the subject by pointing out that neither by commuting between earth and moon nor by cleaning up the earth's pollution can one know the mystery of life, but only by understanding the Four Noble Truths of the Enlightened One.

Describing the three categories of pain in the Buddhist tradition, the author reiterates the truth that "we are alone, we are lonely people, we cannot regenerate our umbilical cord ... pain is inevitable as long as there is the presence of discontinuity and insecurity."

But the apostle of universal compassion and charity, love and self-sacrifice, poverty and contentment, has pointed a way out of the dilemma, so clearly brought out in these four lines by the author:

> I am busy working for others.
> Prajñā, penetrating all obstacles,
> Has made the prince old and wise,
> Fearing no one.

ARGUS

Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man. By U. R. ANANTHA MURTHY; trs. by A. K. RAMANUJAN. (A Three Crowns Book. Oxford University Press, Delhi. 153 pp. 1976. Rs. 10.00)

This is a most remarkable novel, translated from Kannada into English. Not only is it extremely interesting as a story but within the short space of 153 pages it also raises a number of vital questions. What makes a good life? Is there anything of value left in our traditions? Given the ignorance and superstitions of our villages, who will set them right, and how?

Saṁskāra, as A. K. Ramanujan points out both in his Translator's Note and in his Afterword, is a term with a host of meanings — all the way from "forming well" through "realizing the past," "preparing," "consecrating," "a purificatory rite," to "funeral obsequies." All these meanings are relevant for an understanding of the story.

The novel is ostensibly about the funeral of Naranappa, the village scapegrace, struck down by plague. "Alive," he was "an enemy; dead, a preventer of meals." As a corpse he was both a problem and a nuisance. In spite of everything, the body might have been disposed of quickly by someone or another but for the fact that his concubine Chandri offers all her gold ornaments for the deed of piety, thereby causing a fresh complication. Two of his relations, till now indifferent and indeed inimical, are now both anxious to cremate the corpse with full rites and pocket the gold.

But the story is less about Naranappa's funeral than the beginning of a new life for Praneshacharya, the best and most venerable of the Brahmins of Durvasapura. Drawn by Naranappa's light-o'-love, he gets initiated into experiences of which he never dreamt. It is not just sex and sensuality, but a fuller life, a coming out of a shell into the world at large.

Shri Ramanujan's interest in the *rite de passage* makes him an admirable interpreter of the novel, and gets the last ounce of significance from the title.

The central problem of the story, how to dispose of the corpse of a heretic who is not an outcaste, should, Shri Ramanujan says, not have been a problem at all to a *vedānta-śiromaṇi.* A text in the *Dharmasindhu* raises and answers this very question. But while this is a blemish, it

is not so serious a blemish as vultures and crows pecking at plague-ridden rats. It is ironical that while the first slip is necessary for the story and can be defended (by assuming that Praneshacharya was not as well informed as he should have been), the second is both indefensible and a supererogation.

P. S. SUNDARAM

The Heavens Are Cleft Asunder. By HUSCHMAND SABET. (George Ronald, Oxford, xiv+153 pp. 1975. £1.75; $5.00)

This is the first English edition of Huschmand Sabet's *Der Gespaltene Himmel,* first published in Stuttgart in 1967 and widely acclaimed among the German-reading public for its positive and relevant commendation of the Bahá'í religion. If the author's description of "the decline of Christianity" is rather dramatic and perhaps premature, he correctly diagnoses the traditional Christian bodies as having been unable "to create a universal basis for tolerance, love, unity and peace."

The basic Bahá'í tenets are briefly stated and applied to the contemporary world and some of its key issues, the emphasis being on the unity of mankind and the founding of a divine civilization. The threat of nuclear war and misused science demands new attitudes and aspirations among men, which only spiritual transformation can bring about. There is a strong plea for creating "on the foundation of religion a spiritual entente common to all men, races and nations, containing the embryo of the world civilization." Rejecting the notion that the Bahá'í religion is syncretic, the author sees it rather as a spiritual force for human unity in a world made increasingly interdependent by trade, science, and technology. An outline account of the life and teaching of the Bab and Bahã'u'lláh is set clearly in its historical context, and their spiritual message for today argued with compassion and care, no less than with vigour. Devotees of all faiths and none ill find much to inspire and challenge in this book.

BRIAN G. COOPER

Equatorial Guinea: The Forgotten Dictatorship. By *Suzanne Cronjé.* (The Anti-Slavery Society, London. 45 pp. 1976. 75*p.*)

Battles were won in the last century against some aspects of slavery, but, since human nature has, fundamentally, changed little, the problem of inhumanity and slavery (however disguised) remains. The Anti-slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights not only attacks the evils but works also for constructive action, its aims being:

The eradication of slavery and forced labur oinall their forms.

The protection and advancement of aboriginal peoples.

The defence of human rights in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

It is the only organization "recognized by the U.N. as competent to advise either on slavery or on aboriginal peoples," and "it is the sole source of published material on contemporary slavery throughout the world."

The present pamphlet, Research Report No. 2, exposes the forced labour and political murder in the small state of Equatorial Guinea in

Central Africa. It formed the basis of the Anti-Slavery Society's evidence being considered by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, following its decision of August 1976 to examine conditions in that country. The world has remained ignorant of the terrible and terrifying state of affairs there, under the dictatorship of President Macias. His absolute rule has sent a quarter of its 1969 population of 286,000 into exile, caused suicide by political prisoners to reach epidemic proportions, and brought about the wholesale disappearance of prominent figures and the destruction of dissidents and families in any way connected with dissidents.

Suzanne Cronjé has drawn aside the curtain of silence that has allowed the President's "brutal and unpredictable" government to remain dominant. For this silence she blames not only his régime, but also foreign governments, business firms, and U.N. agencies who have carried the principle of non-interference in "domestic" matters too far. All the accusations, and the evidence given, are detailed, given without flourishes, and thoroughly documented. It is to be hoped that the challenge will result in relief coming to a suffering but potentially prosperous country.

W. CARROLL

The New Black Presence in Britain: A Christian Scrutiny: A Statement by the British Council of Churches' Working Party on Britain as a Multi-Racial Society. (Community and Race Relations Unit of the British Council of Churches, London. 40 pp. 1976. Paperback, 40*p*.)

The historic Churches in Britain are grappling with what it means to live in a society which has become, as a result of settlement from the New Commonwealth, a multi-religious, multi-cultural, and multi-racial one. It is not always easy, but it is usually very challenging. Awareness of a wide range of race-related problems has spurred corporate Churches and individual Christians to work for inter-cultural harmony. Discrimination in housing and employment, lack of adequate educational advancement, inner-city deprivation, racism in British political life, and the widespread alienation of many young West Indians from the values and expectations of British society have forced themselves on the conscience of the Churches. The special report by the British Council of Churches, for study by church groups all over the country, is both part of the response and part of the process of listening to ethnic minority voices. For many British Christians, reading the report and examining its implications has been a very disturbing process.

It is not about primarily religious questions, such as inter-faith dialogue, but seeks to relate Christian responsibility to the deep social, economic, and cultural issues raised by Britain's transformation into a multi-racial society. Focusing particularly on the West Indian experience, voiced through Mr. Gus John, an experienced youth-and-community-worker who served as chairman of the Report Working Party, it sees the deprivation and discrimination suffered by many ethnic minority people as a continuation of those attitudes and policies of racial superiority which were characteristic of the British imperial past. Described as "a cry of anguish from the underprivileged," the report evidences from the Christian standpoint a deep failure of British society to work out its priorities for social and economic justice, and a manifest failure on the part of the Churches to work out the demands of the Christian Gospel for fullness of life for the poor and

oppressed.

The Report contains such "uncomfortable words" that the General Secretary of the British Council of Churches, while being broadly sympathetic, felt forced to dissent publicly from some of Mr. John's more pessimistic analyses, especially the notion that justice for the underprivileged ethnic minorities can only come with a drastic re-ordering of British society. Yet the facts of discrimination, and the historical perspective of Britain as a post-imperial nation, are commonly understood. Mr. John's dismissal of White liberal attempts to work for racial harmony, however, though perhaps understandable, is certainly unfortunate, and would not be shared by many in the immigrant communities. "I can think of few occasions on which Britain has done something in response to the black situation which was not dictated by self-interest and geared ultimately to saving itself" (p. 17) — one hopes Mr. John is not correct, but one fears he may be.

All this puts a great onus on the established British Churches, the new "Black Churches" of the Afro-Caribbean tradition, Indian Christians in Britain, and the Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu communities to work for inter-racial harmony and inter-cultural understanding. The report found much evidence that many poor Black people were looking to the Churches, as having, in principle, "a unique combination of conscience and power" in British society, to be a force for social justice. Many possibilities for local community action are set forth in the report. The need for closer links between the historic Churches and the "newly established" churches, mainly Black Pentecostal, urged in the report, is being met. The British Council of Churches and the grouping of the Black-Led Churches' Movement are working for ecumenical liaison. As both streams of Christianity in Britain today come together, they will be able to be more effective in promoting inter-racial harmony. In concert with the other major world religions now strongly represented among Britain's ethnic minority peoples, they could be more effective. Such a process of social pressure, new ecumenism, and inter-faith action involves the Church in a rediscovery of its true self and message.

> It involves the whole spiritual activity of the Church, what kind of deity it contemplates and adores, what kind of hopes it expresses in its intercession and in its cry for divine mercy, what kind of sin and failure it confesses as it seeks liberation and absolution, and (perhaps most important) what kind of good news it gives thanks for and what kind of values it celebrates as it offers its worship.

BRIAN G. COOPER

Contraception and Astrology

Following a report in the *Lancet* that the contraceptive pill was blamed for an increased death rate in women taking it, from disease and strokes, and that further research was needed, Carol Dix made her own enquiries about it (*The Guardian,* 18 and 19 November 1976). She questioned women who had been taking it continuously for long periods since it came on the market fifteen years ago, or who had come off it. She touched upon research studies that have been done on various aspects of contraception or are being done, including those on the use of IUDs (coils). She collected researchers' differing views on the possible long-term effects on metabolism and the ageing process. Some women described drastic results after they

came off the pill; on others it apparently left no ill effects, though she found that secondary amenorrhea was becoming accepted as a pill phenomenon, and is, as one gynaecologist, Katherina Dalton, put it, "blocking our infertility clinics up and down the country." Some learned researchers consider that, to date, the "social and psychological benefits" of the pill would seem to outweigh its hazards. But all researchers are forced to admit that, as regards the long-term effects, particularly at the change of life, no-one knows the answers.

A write-up of a back-to-nature contraception technique followed the survey. That system was worked out in Czechoslovakia by a psychologist, Eugen Jonas, and developed by a gynaecologist, Kurt Rechnitz. In Britain it has been taken up by a young Canadian woman, Meredy Benson. The rhythm method of birth control, accepted by the Roman Catholic Church, fails if there is inaccuracy in counting days. The Jonas-Rechnitz system, claiming to be less liable to error, defines two fertility periods, ovulation time and astrological fertility time. The first can be checked from certain physiological reactions, the second by noting the sun-moon angle of the day the woman was born, which is repeated once in a twenty-nine-day cycle. Both are times of fertility, which may or may not coincide. It is not claimed that the method is a hundred per cent certain. The East European researchers still have questions to answer, but the evidence points to human beings having "a dynamic cyclic relationship with the universe." The method has also been used in cases of infertility, though opinions differ as to its worth there. What is interesting is the fact that such research is going on. Michel Gauquelin's statistical studies of astrological configurations that synchronize at the time of birth with particular characteristics are also worth a mention, as is what H. P. Blavatsky wrote, as far back as 1888 (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 228-9 fn.):

> If instead of being taught in Sunday Schools useless lessons from the Bible, the armies of the ragged and the poor were taught Astrology — so far, at any rate, as the occult properties of the Moon and its hidden influence on generation are concerned, then there would be little need to fear increase ot the population nor to resort to the questionable literature of the Malthusians for its arrest. For it is the Moon and her conjunctions that regulate conceptions, and every astrologer in India knows it. During the previous and present races, at least at the beginning of this one, those who indulged in marital relations during certain lunar phases that made those relations sterile were regarded as sorcerers and sinners. But even now those sins of old, based on the Occult knowledge and the abuse of it, would appear preferable to the crimes of to-day, which are perpetrated because of the complete ignorance of, and disbelief in, all such occult influences.

As a final point, the following letter (*The Guardian*, 21 November 1976) indicates that some have escaped the obsessive conditioning to the belief that sexual activity, in itself, is "a necessity":

> Having read some of your remorselessly regular articles about the dangerous side effects of almost every kind of birth control I have taken it upon myself to tell you that there is a method of birth control with no ill effects. We are a happy family, I have five children. After our youngest was born a year ago, we were confronted with a problem, what do we do to avoid an unwanted pregnancy?
>
> I felt that the Pill, coil, loop, etc. were degrading to us as people. After all who wants to swallow a tablet one of whose constituents is horse's urine? And still further the mechanical aids to contraception seemed even worse. I decided the only way to really justify my humanity and be really a man was to abstain from sex. No more "moments of infinite bliss" and fear of my wife being pregnant.
>
> Instead after an initial fear of the unknown (rather like giving up smoking), just a real peace and calm and deeper and deeper love between us. I began to challenge my deeply ingrained sexual mores and found

that most of my ideas of normal, natural living *vis-à-vis* sex were a con (forgive the colloquialism). I quote a 24-year-old editorial assistant from Carol Dix's catalogue of calamity of November 18: "I'm into health foods and being natural now. Everyone's into coils now." This is a nice example of self-delusion. The most wholly healthy natural way of contraception is to do what nature intends and refrain from sex unless you want a child.

Instantly fears and arguments will flare up in your mind. I expected I'd become obsessed with women and sexual thoughts would fill my mind. Quite the contrary. It's really like drinking in that one drink only creates a thirst for the next drink. Rather than satisfy your desire (or else you'd only drink once) and as cigarettes only cause you to want the next fag, so sex in this so-called permissive society only creates a hunger.

RICHARD GRAMMON

[a mistake for GAMMON],
Nottingham

After some comments by other correspondents, two of them very sneering, Mr. Gammon wrote again (*The Guardian*, 1 December 1976):

Lives Enriched

Sir,

In view of the flippant treatment by your correspondents (November 27) of my letter, I feel obliged to reiterate that to give up sex is the only moral, healthy, natural form of contraception. It needs no defence. *The Guardian* will continue to publish articles showing the dangers of the Pill, etc. The Press generally will report rapes, child assaults, pornographic excesses, as man's misplaced sexual drive assumes, for some, gross proportions. Adultery will break up erstwhile happy marriages as people seek the Holy Grail of a lasting, meaningful relationship based on sexual compatibility.

I am seeking no covert spurious "fame" — your mistake in my name I find gratifying — I merely want to say that we have enriched our life together, and thereby our children's lives, too, by this simple expedient. And the love we enjoy and the happiness we know is an eloquent answer to the libidinous *non-sequiturs* of those dedicated to the vain pursuit of "free" love.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD GAMMON

23A Court Street,
Hyson Green, Nottingham

Ends and Sayings

"... ends of verse
And sayings of philosophers."
—SAMUEL BUTLER, *Hudibras*

THE BIBLE — HISTORY OR LITERATURE?

A twelve-part television series on B.B.C.2, presented by Magnus Magnusson, "B.C.: The Archaeology of the Bible Lands," indicated a radical change in archaeological attitudes to the Bible. In an explanatory article "Looking for Abraham" (*The Listener*, 20 January 1977), Magnusson wrote:

> The Bible used to exist in a historical vacuum. Like some Indian rope trick, it hung suspended in the ether, unrelated to any objective environment. The creation myth itself was studied and analysed only on its own terms—to such an extent that Archbishop James Ussher of Armagh, in Ireland, felt justified in using *Genesis* to "prove" that the Creation took place in 4004 B.C.

But excavations have shown that the evolution of man must have extended millenia earlier.

> The Bible is not original, in the sense of being the first. The Hebrews came late into the Semitic scene of the ancient Middle East. It should not surprise us unduly that their thinkers were aware of the religious, cultural and philosophical environment of their age, and used it to construct their own model of the past. It would be astonishing if they had not done so.

One recent discovery at Tell Mardikh, Syria, by an Italian team under Dr. Paolo Matthiae, has been that of the city of Ebla, capital of a widespread Canaanite empire, with an immense royal archive, whose clay tablets refer to Biblical places and Biblical names (Abraham, Ishmael, Michael, David, Saul) several hundred years before the date hitherto attributed to Abraham (about 1900 B.C.). We cannot assume, Magnusson pointed out, that, historically, "Abraham *can* be found in any meaningful way." Though some archaeologists still remain "Fundamentalists," still searching for the grounded Ark on Ararat, the general aim of Biblical-site digs today is to try "to discover a culture rather than a cult." The idea of the Bible as historical fact has been largely undermined by the "massive documentation of the Egyptian state archives" which has no mention whatever of the Bible narratives — Moses, Joseph, the slavery of the Jews in Egypt, the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea.

Today the Bible is being studied, not as revelation or as history, but more as "a marvellous literary epic" that can tell us something of the people and society for whom it was written. The question still remains, Magnusson wrote, of *when* the need was felt by Israel and Judah to present a father-figure like Abraham, and a historical background, whether in order to reinforce the idea of nationhood, or to offset the depressive weight of bondage and defeat. Recognition of the influences of earlier cultures will, he affirmed, clarify the contradictions and inconsistencies of the Bible stories, yet allow them to retain the vivid meaning that underlies them. A Christian's real faith is not destroyed if knowledge and understanding are added to it.

We may note that, even in the last century, scholars recognized that the Bible narratives had prototypes, e.g. the Babylonian tale of King Sargon's rescue as a babe from the basket of rushes floating on the river preceded that of Moses. Professor Sayce, in his 1887 Hibbert Lecture, said:

Much of the theology was borrowed by the Semites from the non-Semitic Akkadians or proto-Chaldeans, whom they supplanted, and whose local cults they had neither the will nor the power to uproot. Indeed, throughout a long course of ages the two races, Semites and Akkadians, lived side by side, their notions and worship of the gods blending insensibly together.

He stated further that the culture of the Babylonian city, Eridu, came from India, thus being in agreement with H. P. Blavatsky, who wrote in *Isis Unveiled* (1877):

Though containing the same substratum of esoteric truth as every early Cosmogony, the Hebrew Scripture wears on its face the marks of a double origin. The *Genesis* is purely a reminiscence of the Babylonian captivity. The names of places, men, and even objects, can be traced from the original text to the Chaldeans and the Akkadians, the progenitors and Aryan instructors of the former. ... They (the Akkadians) were simply emigrants on their way to Asia Minor from India, the cradle of humanity, and their sacerdotal adepts tarried to civilize and initiate a barbarian people. ... Babylonian civilization was neither born nor developed in that country. It was imported from India, and the importers were Brahmanical Hindus. (I. 576)

Later she wrote, in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888):

... Jewish Biblical history was a compilation of *historical* facts, arranged from other people's history in Jewish garb—Genesis excluded, which is esotericism pure and simple. (II. 203)

The similarities in the Creation stories of all religions, whether sophisticated or "savage," surely, despite the variations in the allegorical language, point to a body of universal truth. Incidentally, the "Garden of Eden" is another shared concept. The recognition of a wisdom-religion, a perennial philosophy, a sacred occult science (call it what you will) that is the *fons et origo* of all fundamental knowledge about life, could, it is claimed, give a basis for sifting and synthesizing our understanding of any aspect of it. It will indeed enlarge faith, not undermine it.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

IDEAS ABOUT DEATH

In medieval Europe when the Black Death was an ever-present threat or reality, a favourite theme of illustrators was the "Dance of Death," the skeleton at the feast, striking the rich churchman and noble equally with the ploughman, the bride and the babe as much as the soldier. Today, there is also a preoccupation with death, more concerned, however, with moral questions arising from the deliberate causation of death than with the medieval feeling of its inevitability.

Even leaving aside the problem of war, there are questions about capital punishment, euthanasia, abortion, deaths due to iatrogenic causes (the term denotes disorders produced by some medical treatment); there are doubts about the efforts to stave off death by blood transfusions, transplants, injections, and all the sophisticated technology that keeps a body alive, though only in a vegetable condition.

It is worth while looking at a few recent news items, as well as views on these subjects.

Dr. Margaret Whyte (*Sunday Times*, 30 January 1977) congratulated the paper on publishing Sonia Behr's article, bringing out the link between oral contraceptives and long-term infertility. Dr. Whyte condemned the "conspiracy of silence" that, though medical journals regularly reported ill-effects from taking the "Pill," gave it "diplomatic immunity" as regards any public criticism.

Dr. Beral of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has analysed mortality trends in 21 countries, and believes that as many as 200 deaths a million each year from

cardio-vascular diseases may be attributed to the use of oral contraceptives.

The formation was reported by Paula Davies (*The Daily Telegraph,* 19 December 1976) of the British Section of a World Federation of Doctors Who Respect Human Life, and who are officially opposed to euthanasia and abortion, particularly in relation to population control. Dr. Peggy Norris, its Honorary Secretary, who was with the Control Commission in Germany after the last World War, was among the many horrified at the way in which even the most eminent members of the German medical profession, during the Hitler régime, had actively engaged in the selection and extermination of the mentally ill and retarded. As a result, the Hippocratic Oath was reformulated in the 1948 Geneva Declaration — though its definition of respect for human life may still be felt to be somewhat vague: "... from the moment of its conception, even under threat, I will not use my medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity."

The Chairman of the British Section, Philip R. Norris (no relation), pointed out the need to choose one's doctor with even greater care.

The patient has a right to know what the doctor's attitudes are. Take the Abortion Act. I know many liberal-minded people who supported this but are now horrified that abortion is being used as a form of contraception. The same implications apply to euthanasia. Once the principle is allowed that you can kill people—in whatever name it is dressed up — the floodgates are open.

Paula Davies referred to the real possibility of new laws on euthanasia (already legislated in the State of California) leading to "grave distrust of the medical profession, not to mention far worse results in terms of human behaviour."

The question of capital punishment is again in the news. The most influential professional association of French magistrates, at its last annual congress, condemned the guillotine and asked the Government to abolish the death sentence (*The Guardian,* 30 November 1976). The President, M. Giscard, has the prerogative of confirming or commuting the death sentence, but the whole subject is a controversial one that surfaces periodically.

In the U.S.A. the periodic swing has veered towards support of the death penalty (the Gallup Poll showed 65% in favour compared with 42% ten years back). Yet the demand of the terriorist-murderer, Gary Gilmore, to be executed by a firing squad instead of life-imprisonment, and his shooting at Utah State Prison, 17 January 1977, has been widely characterized as a bizarre, macabre, grotesque, horror show. Certainly it has aroused the basest element of human nature, reminiscent of the degradations of the later period of the Roman Empire in its demands for "entertainment." Christopher Reed (*The Guardian,* 18 January 1977) wrote of "American media of mind-chilling dedication towards recording the most ghoulish details" — conducted tours for journalists; six TV teams; spotter helicopters; film producer Larry Schiller outbidding rivals for film and book rights of the Gilmore story. What, moreover, is disturbing is that the event may speed the further implementation of the death penalty.

The U.S. Supreme Court has held that the death penalty is constitutional if certain requirements are met and 36 States have hastened to enact new death penalty laws which they hope will meet those requirements (*The Guardian,* 30 November 1976).

And — there is not one iota of proof that, after bodily death, the thinking, feeling, self-conscious life is extinct. In fact, the growing number of claimants to "out-of-the-body" experience bear witness to the contrary, even without all the religions' testi-

mony to the existence of soul.

Two fundamental ideas desperately needed today are those of "Reincarnation" and "Karma" (action-reaction as equal and opposite, or, expressed morally, "we reap exactly what we have sown"). Reincarnation has nothing to do with hypnotically produced narratives (there is another explanation for these). It makes clear the distinction between the transient personality (*persona*) of one life, and the divine soul that gathers experience through each *persona*, and, under the law of Karma, either acquires greater powers of soul-expression or, when the personality is unruly, finds them handicapped or distorted. This concept of reincarnation throws light on the relation between the old materialistic and decadent Roman civilization and our own — a parallel that quite a few thinkers have noted.

Holding these two ideas as guidelines would change the values held about life and death, and transform misguided legislation and the distortions of the media. Though mankind has trodden wrong paths for so long that the change-over must be slow, "the length of the road is only the length of the step." Looking around at the many problems of today in the light of this, we need not let discouragement overwhelm us.

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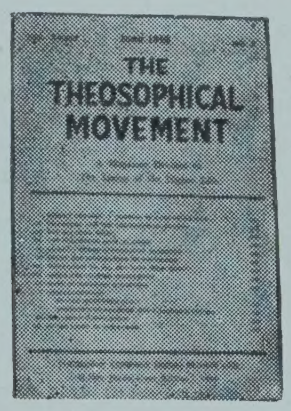

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THE ARYAN PATH

The delayed January-February 1977 issue of THE ARYAN PATH *was the last to be published and despatched (in August 1980)*

THE ARYAN PATH *has gone through great difficulties in recent years. During the latter half of 1978 and the early months of 1979 circumstances beyond the publishers' control made it necessary to divert indispensable staff-time to critical work in other departments of the publishing trust. The manuscripts for November-December 1975 and January-February 1977 were placed in printers' hands by the middle of 1979. Unusual difficulties, mechanical and technical, arose at their end; which were resolved to some extent with our help last year. Incidental delays and difficulties have again intervened in the printing process, so that this March-April 1977 issue has been in printers' hands since August 1980, though it is only in December that we are able to release it for final printing.*

It is proposed to follow this with the January-February 1978 issue; and after that by 1977 and 1978 issues alternately. The 1979 issues (which will constitute Volume 50) will be taken up on the completion of the 1977 Volume.

However, a Special Advance Issue, to be regarded as part of Volume 50, has already been in printers' hands for some time and will be issued as soon as practicable.

Publishers' decisions as to publication beyond Volume 50 will be announced later. Meanwhile plans have been made to complete the publication of the Volumes up to the end of 1979 (i.e. Volume 50). Further announcements will be made in the delayed issues as they are published. It appears probable, however, that the present series of volumes of THE ARYAN PATH *will conclude with Volume 50 and that a new series, perhaps with the journal as a quarterly, will be issued as from some date from which regular publication can be ensured. It is already clear that there will be no volume as for 1980.*

We are grateful for the great patience and sympathy shown by our subscribers, contributors and readers. We shall endeavour to fulfil their trust.

December 1980

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Printed and published by P. Rangarajan at W. Q. Judge Press,
97, Residency Road, Bangalore 560 025.